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# THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

## A POLITICAL HISTORY

# THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

## A POLITICAL HISTORY

1789—1804

BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF THE THIRD EDITION
WITH A PREFACE, NOTES, AND HISTORICAL SUMMARY BY
BERNARD MIALL

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1793—1797

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# III

## *THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT*

1793—1797

# A CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF EVENTS, OCTOBER, 1793, TO AUGUST, 1797 (*THERMIDOR* OF THE YEAR V)

BY THE TRANSLATOR

**1793**

Oct. 10. The Revolutionary Government is proclaimed. Henceforth the chief executive power is in the hands of the Committee of Public Safety.

14. Marie Antoinette is brought to trial; a measure intended
15. partly to defy and intimidate Europe. The trial, conducted
16. with extreme brutality, terminates the following night. At sunrise the next morning Paris is under troops; 30,000 horse and foot are on guard or patrol duty. At eleven the Queen is brought out, bound, on a tumbril, accompanied by a constitutional priest dressed as a layman. Shortly after twelve she dies on the guillotine, amid cries of *Vive la République.*

28. Next follows the trial of the Girondists—the Twenty-one. The trial is long, the defence too eloquent, too just. On the 28th a deputation from the Tribunal, headed by Hébert, enters the Convention to complain that justice is hampered by forms and rules. The jury feels it should be able to "terminate debates"—that is, to refuse to hear either witness, counsel, or accused any further *when otherwise convinced.* The Convention passes an infamous decree in conformity with the wishes of the deputation.

30. Late at night on the 30th the Girondists are brought back to the Tribunal, and are informed of the decree; also that the jury has cut the trial short, as it is convinced of their guilt; and that the sentence pronounced is death. At this the prisoners passionately protest. Valazé stabs himself and falls dead. The Girondists are returned to prison, singing the *Marseillaise.* After a night spent in gay and

witty discourse they are brought out to die. Vergniaud had intended suicide, but refrains, as the rest have no means of self-destruction. They answer the cries of the crowd by cries of *Vive la République*, and at the scaffold sing the *Marseillaise*, each singing till he dies.

(Seventy-five other Girondists were imprisoned, but the Tribunal dared not bring them to trial. The people had demanded twenty-two; the number stuck in their heads; twenty-two were arrested and twenty-one brought to trial, though by no means the same as those whose names were contained in the first list.

Louvet, Guadet, Barbaroux, Buzot, Salles, Valady, Roland, and Petion were at large in Rouen or the south-west; soon to be hunted fugitives. Louvet, making a dash through Paris in November, escaped to Switzerland. Guadet and Salles were taken and executed. Barbaroux, Buzot, and Petion managed to hide until the summer of 1794; Barbaroux killed himself at a false alarm; the bodies of the other two were found two days later, eaten by dogs or swine.)

Nov. 3. The Duc d'Orléans, though accused with the Girondists, is only now brought to trial; being brought to Paris from his southern prison. On the day of his trial Mme. Josephine Tascher Beauharnais and Mme. Dubarry are imprisoned.

Orléans is accused of conspiracy, royalism, &c. He is
6. quickly sentenced. He dies unruffled and unmoved.

8. Two days later Mme. Roland, long in prison, where she has written her *Mémoires*, is brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal. "Liberty," she cries, to a statue of Liberty facing the scaffold, "what things are done in thy name!" She dies before her companion in the tumbril, a printer; to show him how quick and easy is death. Some days later Roland, hearing of her death at Rouen, takes a farewell of his friends and falls upon his sword outside the city.

(The Terror is now daily growing more terrible. The Revolutionary Government has proclaimed its policy to be liberty at any cost. Its real policy is to war upon enemies external and internal; and the country is in a state of panic; Chaumette and Hébert lead the Commune of Paris, and seek to influence the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety, demanding extreme democratic laws. The Mountain, on the other hand, seeks to escape the influence of the Committee.

Manuel, Bailly, and Barnave are the next victims. De-

puties, generals, nobles follow. The prisons are full; the guillotines are busy throughout France. There is a prison in every commune of France; the property of all condemned being confiscated, it is unsafe to be rich. The Revolutionary Committees are gathering in "suspects" all over France.

The progress of the Terror in the provinces may be described in a few words; though the operations described cover a long period. The Communal party sent out a Revolutionary Army of 6,000 under the dramatist Ronsin, with the purpose of purging the provinces. It operated chiefly in the departments around Paris. At various dates Carrier was sent to Nantes, drowning and shooting; Tallien to Bordeaux; Maignet to Orange; Lebon to Arras; Jeanbon Saint-André to Brest; Fouché, Barras, Fréron and others were in the south. In all cities tainted with royalism or Girondism the guillotine and the musket were busy. Marseilles and Lyons were besieged and taken; Lyons was condemned to be razed to the ground; but the process was never completed. There Jacobin after Jacobin took his turn at the slaughter. Toulon, strongly defended by the royalists and an English squadron, for a long time seemed impregnable. Bonaparte was there, with his artillery, under Barras; a fateful conjunction. In December, 1793, the town was taken through the Corsican's strategy, Admiral Hood taking off many royalists. There also the usual work of slaughter began; 12,000 masons were asked for to destroy all but the arsenals and shipyards. Meanwhile in Paris, despite the Terror, all went on as usual; all the theatres, dancing halls, and cafés were open and crowded; only on the streets leading from the prisons to the guillotines, and then only for a few minutes each day, was anything seen of the Terror. But no man was safe, unless a Jacobin and inconspicuous.)

During November many hundreds of priests—among them Gobel, Bishop of Paris—not uninfluenced by Hébert's party—resign their stipends and their offices, stating that henceforth liberty shall be their only god. Ex-curés learn trades and marry, often with liberated nuns. Addresses reach the Convention from the country in which the people state they will have no more to do with priests. Church property is confiscated to swell the war-fund; bells are melted into cannon; church plate goes to the Mint; vestments make breeches for the breechless. Chaumette proposes a Festival of Reason to inaugurate the new religion.

Nov. 16. It is held on the 16th. Candeille, an opera-singer, is borne aloft in procession, as the Goddess of Reason, to Notre-Dame; most of the Convention and a vast crowd accompanying her in procession. The churches are the scenes of orgies of drunken and hysterical intoxication and license.

Much of the looting round Paris is done by Ronsin's Revolutionary Army.

(During this period Carnot was the head of the military organisation. Fourteen armies were at last in the field.)

The destructive process of the Terror is almost at its height; the able blackguard or fanatic is certain of his share of power. Humanity, moderation, foresight, or any qualities save hatred of the outward and inward enemies, are becoming *suspect*.

The Revolutionary Commune, with Pache for Mayor and Hanriot for commandant of the forces, contains the ultra-Jacobins or *Enragés;* who are too extreme even for the bulk of the Convention. In every commune the Revolutionary Committees are growing busier; they are really so many Jacobin clubs endowed with executive power, and using it with murderous recklessness and cupidity. The country being truly in danger, and practically in charge of the mob, is in a state of mingled panic and defiance, the reflex of which is the Terror; the worse in that the mere unchaining of ferocious passions is reckoned as patriotism.

The Convention does little but receive deputations and orders from the Committee of Public Safety.

Dec. 5. On this day Robespierre attacks the Hébertist faction, and states his belief that Pitt and other enemies are trying to destroy the Republic by inciting the sections to impossible extremes; a curious belief many French historians share. Hébert's Religion of Reason offends Robespierre; he causes a decree to be passed forbidding the opposition by violent means of religious liberty.

The Mountain has for some time been getting restive under the domination of the Committee of Public Safety. Basire and Chabot complain that the Convention is no longer a free deliberative assembly; they complain of the lack of a working opposition. They are consequently imprisoned.

France is full of the "representatives on mission"; most of whom exercise almost absolute power; raising

money, organising army supplies, arresting and guillotining. Almost blockaded by the state of war, France must turn to and forge her own weapons. The whole country under requisition, something is required of every one—money, provisions, bells and bronze for cannon, guns, swords, boots, tents, gunpowder—something all must furnish or help to furnish.

Each general on the frontier has three attendants from the Convention as a preventive of treason. Rightly or not, many generals are sent to Paris and are guillotined. On the whole the French arms have a long period of success; Austria and Spain are driven over their frontiers; Spain, invaded, finally capitulates. France is practically ruled, without and within, by "representatives on mission."

About this time Chappe first tries his invention of the aërial telegraph—a line of semaphores running to the frontier; and the balloon is first used in warfare.

Fashions are democratic; the red bonnet is *de rigueur*.

**1794**

MARCH. The condition of things outlined above — democracy unleashed, yet organised, triumphant on the frontiers, murderous at home—continues unchanged until March; when there is a sudden attack on the Cordelier leaders; ascribed, as usual, to the ubiquitous Pitt. Hébert and his followers, more extreme than even the Jacobins, have found the Convention too moderate, and have said so, at the Cordeliers' Club; have even suggested that the Convention holds too many moderates, and is by no means properly patriotic. Such accusations are dangerous. In March
15. Hébert, Ronsin, Momoro and others are clapped into
18. the Luxembourg; Chaumette follows on the 18th. There is also uneasiness and "purging" among the Jacobins.
24. On this day the Hébertists go to execution, mocked by the crowd. They are nine in number. Ronsin being dead, the Revolutionary Army withers away, and the *Enragés* are broken. They were too dangerous in their extreme zeal—the Dantonists are considered dangerous for the lack of it.

(As far back as December Danton, sick of the Terror, was sent for to come up from Arcis, as his friends scented danger. He came; perhaps to precipitate the fall of his party.

He and his followers desired the victory of the armies, but peace and conciliation at home. Men of common

sense, and humane men, they longed for a permanent working policy. They desired to see the prisons emptied, the Revolutionary Tribunals closed. Desmoulins was writing in favour of a "justice" tempered with mercy. His pen pricked Robespierre too often for his own safety.

During these few months many who seemed secure had fallen. Tom Paine and Clootz were in prison—Paine to escape through a gaoler's negligence.)

There seemed no room for both Danton and Robespierre upon the former's return. Danton could have mastered the Convention; could have governed France; Robespierre perhaps knew that terror was his only strength. They meet; a scornful remark of Danton's in reply to Robespierre's statement that no innocent person had ever perished fans the latter's hatred. Danton is warned of danger—that his arrest is being discussed—but does not escape. He does not really believe that Robespierre dare arrest him; his popularity and his services have been too great. He goes to sleep one night in that belief. During

MAR. 30. the night he, Desmoulins, Philippeaux, and Westermann and others are arrested. Danton is refused a hearing at the bar of the Convention. He is heard, in prison, to crave pardon of God and man for his part in the establishment of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

APRIL 3. Danton and his friends are brought before the Tribunal in a "batch" with Chabot, Basire, Fabre d'Églantine, and others. Danton's defence is too able; on the 3rd the Committee of Public Safety hurriedly procures a new decree, enabling the defence of prisoners who "insult justice" to be stifled. Sentence follows; on the 5th all are guillotined.

10. On this day the widows of Hébert and Desmoulins follow, with Chaumette and the ex-bishop Gobel, who craves absolution at the last moment.

Pache goes to prison. The over-revolutionary Cordeliers and the under-revolutionary Dantonists are alike broken; Robespierre is now supreme, and without a will or a policy sufficient to guide France. The Terror is now at its height. Among its victims are Louis XVI's sister and Lavoisier, the great chemist, who vainly begs for a fortnight in which to conclude an experiment.

22. On the 22nd D'Éprémesnil, Malesherbes, and Thouret are executed. Tinville empties the prisons much as he wills; any pretext for accusation serves; prison plots when others fail.

MAY 12–14. On these nights of May Paris sups out of doors; scantily, for provisions are always scarce: a "Supper of Fraternity."

23. Collot d'Herbois is nearly shot by a Southerner who had hoped to kill Robespierre. A few days later one Cécile Rénault, a young girl, is apparently impelled to imitate Charlotte Corday. She calls to ask for Robespierre: he is out. She is found to have left a basket containing knives a few doors off, and is arrested.

JUNE 8. In June (on the 20th of *Prairial*) there is a festival in the Tuileries Gardens. Robespierre, in his new *rôle* of unfettered Dictator, wishes to impose a religion upon his people. The Convention has at his behest decreed the existence of a Superior Being and the immortality of the soul. Robespierre, in the centre of a hastily-constructed amphitheatre, burns various combustible effigies of atheism, anarchy, &c., revealing a fire-proof statue of Wisdom. Processions follow. Robespierre's desire, when the Terror has completely purged France of "traitors," is to form a republic after the supposed manner of the ancients; a community of simple, austere, incorruptible manners. Meanwhile he goes about amid a bodyguard of volunteers bearing loaded sticks.

One Catherine Théot, an ancient bedridden servant, discovers Robespierre to be the Messiah of Revelation.

10. Couthon proposes decrees to facilitate the work of arrest and slaughter; he wants four Tribunals instead of one, with a guillotine on the premises. The Convention, and even the Committee protests; but Robespierre obtains the passage of Couthon's decrees. Their effect is that all enemies of the Republic are guilty—and shall have no counsel.

17. The would-be assassin of Collot d'Herbois, one Amiral, is executed; with d'Éprémesnil's widow and fifty-two others.

MAY, JUNE, JULY. The prisons of Paris now hold 12,000 prisoners; nearly all certain to be guillotined if the Terror continue long enough. Nightly musters are now called in the various prisons.

Robespierre, since his inauguration of the new religion, goes rarely to Convention or Committee. Catherine Théot's discovery is regarded as something of a joke: she is nicknamed the "Mother of God." Certain journals have spoken of the affair, and of Robespierre, satirically. No man feels his head safe on his shoulders. Robespierre has of late imposed his will on the Convention through the

Jacobins rather than led it; he knows himself feared, and wonders who is not his enemy or rival. He has spoken of the Convention as being gangrened with corruption, and of having it purged. For over a month he does not visit even the Committee. There are rumours of an intended massacre of the Convention, when Robespierre would become Dictator, and the Jacobins his bodyguard. There are tales of lists of the proscribed in his possession; the general uneasiness and suspicion increases.

JUNE 26. After a long absence Robespierre reappears in the Convention. In a long, wild speech he out-Héberts Hébert; he only, in his own eyes, is the true patriot in the Convention. The Terror must purge the whole land yet more thoroughly, till only the real patriots be left. . . . His speech falls upon a dead, hostile silence. Lecointre moves that it be printed and sent to the provinces. The order is made and revoked. Fréron complains that liberty of opinion is gone. Robespierre retires — to go to the Jacobins, there to read his speech again. He declares himself incorruptible, ready to die for his country. The Jacobins say they will die with him. The Convention is to be cleared of the lukewarm: Hanriot is to head the insurrection. D'Herbois, hurrying from the Jacobins to the Committee of Public Safety, accuses Saint-Just of being in the plot; Saint-Just retires. All night Paris is awake; the two parties—Robespierre and the Jacobin Commune on one side, and the greater part of the Convention on the other—are confirming, preparing, sending messages to and fro, making ready for the great struggle.

27. The next morning (the 9th of *Thermidor*) the Convention meets undisturbed. Scarcely has Saint-Just begun to read a report when Tallien starts to his feet, followed by others. "I trembled for the Republic last night at the Jacobins. . . If the Convention dare not strike the tyrant, I dare!" and he flourishes a dagger. Immediately the hall is in an uproar. Couthon, Saint-Just, and Robespierre are accused of wishing to form a triumvirate. There are howls of "Tyranny!" "Dictator!" Robespierre rushes to the tribune, and endeavours to speak; the President's bell drowns his voice. Thuriot demands a decree of accusation. It is passed.

Augustin Robespierre and Lebas demand to share Robespierre's fate. Couthon and Saint-Just are also accused and are taken to the room of the Committee of General Security.

Promptly Hanriot, followed by municipal gendarmes, comes galloping to rescue Robespierre. The Municipality is insurgent; no prison is to admit any prisoner; no one is to pass the barriers: Robespierre and his party, if not in prison or out of Paris, may yet be rescued. As for Hanriot, the Tuileries guards seize him and dissuade his followers. The prisoners are sent off under escort to the Luxembourg and elsewhere. The Convention, thinking itself safe, adjourns.

Shortly afterwards all Paris is in an uproar. Hanriot is rescued from the Tuileries, and the Tuileries guards join him, proceeding to the Municipality. The ruse of the Municipals has succeeded; refused admission to the prisons, Robespierre and his friends have escaped to the Hôtel de Ville, and are in communication with the Jacobin Club.

The Convention hastily re-assembles. The Committee-rooms are held by the Jacobins. The members of Convention swear to die at their post; they declare the rebels and the Municipals outlawed. Barras is appointed Commandant of the loyal forces, and commissioners are sent to the provinces.

Meanwhile the people of the sections are rising. The men of Sainte-Antoine stop the daily procession to the guillotine, but Hanriot and his men beat them off.

All night the Convention and the Municipality sit "permanently"; the people of Paris pour forth in arms,
JUNE 28. taking one side or another. Early in the morning the two sides oppose each other in the Place de Grève; one side commanded by Barras; one by Hanriot, but not in person. Both sides have cannon. Before they can come to blows the decree of outlawry against Robespierre and all rebels is read. This means death to the captured. It is too much for the Jacobin citizens; they discreetly disperse: even the municipal artillerymen go over to the Convention, their pieces with them. Hanriot, at the news of the *fiasco*, leaps from a window in the Hôtel de Ville, falling horribly injured into a cesspool. The younger Robespierre follows him; but is not killed. Couthon attempts suicide under a table; Robespierre uses a pistol, but only breaks his jaw. Saint-Just vainly requests Lebas to kill him. Lebas commits suicide. So—shattered, bleeding, and whole—they are taken, and driven to the Tuileries.

At 6 a.m. the Convention, victorious, adjourns. The news flies through Paris; penetrates the prisons, giving

hope. About 4 p.m. the tumbrils set out, the people cursing and rejoicing.

With this, the famous insurrection of the 9th and the execution of the "triumvirate" on the 10th, the Terror is practically at an end. There are a few massacres during the reaction; but they are of Jacobins. After the 9th of *Thermidor* all those who were secretly sick of Jacobin ferocity are at last able to speak freely, thus modifying public opinion. Henceforth no prisoner can be tried without a writ of accusation.

The Government Committees are filled up, Thermidorian leaders being chosen; to be henceforth renewed by one fourth part monthly, the Convention thereby regaining its proper power.

The prisons are rapidly emptying; the erstwhile Jacobin commissioners are in their turn sent to the guillotine. The Revolutionary Committees melt away; the Municipality is as yet not renewed; finally Paris is divided into twelve Communes, that the Convention may henceforth be able to over-rule Paris.

The 73 Girondists resume their seats. Fugitives return; even ex-nobles are safe. France is able to breathe; but
WINTER. the Convention lacks leaders. The social life of Paris is resumed; costume flies into an extreme of pseudo-classical and luxurious extravagance.

Meanwhile the republican armies are everywhere victorious. The total of troops under arms is said to vary from 1,000,000 to 1,700,000 men. They not only drive their enemies back, but cross their frontiers. Holland is occupied. La Vendée is pacified after enormous loss of life, by sweeping and turning movements.

Demands are made that the Constitution of 1793 shall be put into force, or another formed. In November the Jacobin Club is closed, after much conflict in the streets between the Jacobins and the young bloods of the *bourgeoisie* and aristocracy.

The law of the "maximum" is repealed; but trade remains at the lowest ebb; the value of assignats is merely nominal. The people of Paris are on a meagre bread-allowance.

### 1795

MARCH. In March Collot d'Herbois, Billaud-Varenne, Barère, and Vadier are sentenced to deportation.

APRIL. 1. Paris still being in a state of famine, the people rise and sweep into the Convention hall (the 12th of *Germinal*) demanding "Bread and the Constitution of 1793!" They are driven out by one of the *bourgeois* sections. A state of siege is declared. Pichegru, commandant for a day, ends the insurrection.

5. The Peace of Basle is signed: peace is concluded between France and Prussia.

MAY. The reaction from the Terror continues. Fouquier-Tinville and others are executed. In the provinces Jacobins are burned or asphyxiated in the prisons.

20. (*1st of Prairial.*) The people of Paris rise yet again; the sections arm themselves; the hall of the Convention is entered by force. The demand is the same as before: "Bread and the Constitution!" Féraud is killed, and his head cut off. The Convention still sits, forced into the upper seats; but members gradually slip away. At last only sixty are left. These come down among the people, and pass decrees to the rolling of drums. Hardly are these decrees passed when a loyal section enters, with young bloods of the republican aristocracy, armed with bayonets. The mob escapes through doors and windows. The decrees passed are declared non-existent, and some of their authors are declared accused.

21–22. During the next two days (the 2nd and 3rd of *Prairial*) the people still march and riot about Paris. The makers of the void decrees set up a false Convention of their own; but the "Dandies" drive them out of their refuge, and the section of Saint-Antoine, the stronghold of democracy, is disarmed. The murderer of the deputy Féraud on the 1st commits suicide; Rühl does the same; six other accused deputies, when sentenced upon trial, stab themselves with the same knife, which is passed from hand to hand; three fatally. The rest die by the guillotine; and the democratic party has no leaders left. This may fairly be called the end of the Terror, which had at least 4,000 victims.

JUNE 10. Meanwhile the lack of provisions continues. Peace is concluded between France and Spain.

JULY 21. A large body of armed *émigrés*, assisted by the English, lands in Brittany near Quiberon, but is driven off with great loss.

Siéyès is meanwhile constructing a new Constitution; there are to be two Chambers, the Five Hundred and the

Elders or "Ancients"; and an executive Directory of five members; two-thirds of the new Councils must be members of Convention. There are to be active and passive citizens.

Referred to a plebiscite, the Constitution of the year III is accepted by almost the whole of France. It is proclaimed

SEPT. 23. on September 23rd.

OCT. 4. The sections of Paris, however, object to the abolition of universal suffrage. On the 12th of *Vendémiaire* they flock to a "central Committee"; the section of Lepelletier, which rescued the Convention before, is illegally sitting in assembly. The people number some 40,000 armed men. The Convention has a few thousand troops, and arms some volunteers who style themselves the *Men of '89*.

General Menou summons the section of Lepelletier to surrender; failing, he is arrested. The Convention discusses ways and means of safety and defence. Barras is thought of finally; he recommends Bonaparte as his assistant.

OCT. 5. Bonaparte, who is now in Paris, with a rising reputation as an able strategist and artillery officer, is selected by the Convention. Murat, sent to Sablons, brings up the artillery from that camp, barely in time to anticipate the insurgents. Bonaparte posts his guns and men at various strategical points of Paris. The Convention sits "permanently" all night; in the morning the drums are summoning the sections. The day of the 13th of *Vendémiaire* opens indecisively; a few Convention patrols are driven back (or perhaps by strategy retire). The men of the Lepelletier section, who have seized the Pont Neuf, make a rush along the Quai de Voltaire, towards the Tuileries. Bonaparte, in the *cul-de-sac* Dauphin, fires upon them unhesitatingly with grape-shot; fires also from a neighbouring bridge, and from other chosen points. The sections, some hundreds being killed at the first blow, scatter and make for safety; the insurrection is over. Street fighting continues late into the night; next day the sections are disarmed.

Bonaparte is appointed General of the Interior by a grateful Convention.

27. The Directory is installed. The early period of the Revolution, diverted from the cure of the internal social evils of France to one long struggle of the parties for power, is over; the Directory is *bourgeois* and revolutionary, and the Government has no very dangerous rivals. Such as it has it disarms by sudden *coups d'état*. A reaction from the

excitement of public life sets in, and social and private life becomes luxurious and ceremonious.

The Directory starts with an empty exchequer; the armies are in a wretched condition, unpaid, unclothed, unfed. France has ruined herself by defending herself; has drawn too heavily on the wealthy and commercial classes. Nearly half the territory of France has been sold, and the proceeds spent in defence or offence. Nearly forty thousand millions of paper money is afloat, and is practically worthless. The Directory, says Bailleul, began with a three-legged table, an inkstand, some paper, and four chairs, borrowed from a *concierge*. Siéyès refusing to sit in the Directory, Barras replaces him.

The Directory, however, inspires confidence so far by its immediate centralising organisations—so that after the first month it no longer has to feed Paris; provisions once more circulate; agriculture and industry rapidly revive; the idle hordes who lived in clubs or public places return to work. The old monopolies of the nobles are long extinct; land is split up; only work is necessary to restore the wealth of France.

For ready money, the Directory sells the confiscated royal jewels, &c.; also what national property is left; finally, a compulsory loan failing, a new kind of paper money is issued to the extent of 2,400,000,000 francs: the *mandat territorial*, exchangeable not for gold, but for national land. This still further increases the settlement of the land by small proprietors, but otherwise is an evil; there is already too much paper, and bankruptcy is the final result.

Meanwhile the armies are no longer so successful. Pichegru, on the Rhine, turns traitor, and seeks to induce Condé to invade France. England threatens invasion. The army of Italy is destitute. La Vendée rebels once more. Bonaparte is sent to Italy; he, Jourdan, and Moreau, commanding the three armies, are to attack Austria, meeting in the Tyrol and marching on Vienna. Pichegru, not convicted, is superseded and retires from active life.

Hoche quells La Vendée by extremely able strategy, pacifies Brittany, and protects the coast.

### 1796

In the meantime the democrats and royalists revive, and are giving the Directory trouble. They open clubs, which,

FEBRUARY. being seditious, have to be closed by force. They then conspire with the police, who are disbanded. Babeuf, Vadier, and others then try to raise the twelve communes; and plot to restore the Mountain, destroy the Councils, and establish the Constitution of 1793.

MAY. Betrayed by an officer in the Army, whom they sought to seduce, on the 21st of *Floréal*, the eve of the day fixed for the rising, the Babeuvists are seized and sent for trial.

AUGUST. On the 13th of *Fructidor* the same party makes one more attempt. Some seven hundred armed men march upon the Directory at night; to find it safely guarded. Marching to the camp of Grenelle, fatuously hoping to gain it over, they are cut down or put to flight. A military commission beheads, transports, or imprisons the prisoners and known conspirators. Babeuf and his comrades are presently condemned to death. Babeuf and Darthé both stab themselves in court. The democratic party is by this final failure scattered and broken. Shortly after the democratic attempt to reduce the camp of Grenelle the royalists attempt the same enterprise. Unwilling, perhaps, to risk their leaders, they put forward three unknown men. These apply to the commander of the camp, as did the democrats, and by him are delivered to the Directory, and tried in the civil courts. The judges, being royalist or moderate, elected before the insurrection of *Vendémiaire*, merely sentence them to short terms of imprisonment.

The Army is loyal to the Directory: that is, republican. The elected functionaries of the sections are disloyal, being democratic, or moderate, or royalist; to attack the Directory the better they seek to form a counter-revolution. The Directory therefore has to assume a military aspect, making the Army part of the State.

Meanwhile the armies, under their new leaders, repeat their old triumphs. Bonaparte is winning his astounding victories in Italy, occupying and annexing whole kingdoms and provinces, and finally threatens Austria in the Tyrol. His plan of invasion fails through a blunder on the part of Jourdan, who overshoots the enemy when about to join Bonaparte in the Tyrol and is routed. Bonaparte's tactics are repeated; Moreau and Hoche this time meeting him; and Vienna, in a panic, concludes a hasty peace.

**1797**

Austria has already lost Belgium. Bonaparte, by forming a large Italian Republic of various conquered States, has carried the Revolution into Italy. On the north is the new Dutch Republic, on the south-east the Ligurian, and on the east the Swiss; the idea of surrounding itself by republics is making progress in France. Europe is inclined to conclude peace to save further republicanisation.

MAY. The elections of this year return many royalists or moderates. The old Conventionalist element is weakened. Henceforth there is a tendency in the Councils to oppose the Directory. The royalist party has its leaders, journalists, journals, agents, and gains an influence over the people by pretending to lead it. Hence the Directory and the Army are on one side; the Councils and the electoral assemblies on the other.

20. The two Councils take their seats; the unsuccessful traitor, Pichegru, is President of the 500, and Barbé-Marbois of the Elders; and Barthélemy, another moderate, is in the Directory.

The Councils at once attack the Directory, and blame it for a long-continued and expensive war and an empty treasury; they support the liberty of the press, so as to allow of public attacks. They also advocate the return of priests and *émigrés*, and show Catholic tendencies. It is suggested that Catholics shall again use bells, and priests be absolved from the constitutional oath as public functionaries. The result is that the moderates go over to the Directory. Meanwhile unconstitutional priests and *émigrés* return in large numbers. The Directory forms a Constitutional Club, and brings troops up to the environs of Paris, violating the law by which no troops might approach the Councils nearer than twelve leagues. A constitutional party seeks to reconcile the parties, but fails; Carnot being at its head; while the Directory is evidently prepared to violate the Constitution if needful. The Councils demand the dismissal of certain Ministers. The Directory retains them and dismisses the moderate Ministers. It causes the Army to threaten the Councils. Bonaparte, watchful in Italy,

JULY. promises the support of his troops. The Councils are now on the defensive. They order the closing of the constitu-

AUGUST. tional clubs. Both sides prepare for the inevitable conflict.

# BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

## BY THE TRANSLATOR

**Babeuf, François Noël,** the author of the famous "agrarian law," and of a conspiracy (21st of *Floréal*) which might well have ended the Directory but for the fatuity which assumed that the Army would support it, was born about 1763 at St. Quentin, Aisne. By profession he was originally a surveyor. He was a man of great persistence and enthusiasm. It is reasonable to suppose that the Revolution found him already full of the sense of social injustice, since he at once became a supporter of the extremest democratic party. He was remarkable not only as inspiring terror for years by his "agrarian law," but as being one of the chief forerunners of collectivism or communism ; less heard of than others in that he was not a writer of any importance. In 1793, however, he started a newspaper, known in 1794 as the *Tribune du peuple*, signing his own articles "Gracchus Babeuf." He was not without influence in the Commune and the Committee of Public Safety, and opposed Robespierre without losing his head; though he afterwards lamented his loss. His system of communism entailed the abolition of private property, and the collection and distribution, with absolute equality, of the proceeds of the common industry. Under the Directory Babeuf, who had daring as well as an exalted enthusiasm, became the leader of the democrats, and the president of their club at the Panthéon, where he preached the approach of the reign of universal equality and happiness. The club, having proposed to march upon the Legislature, was closed by the Directory in February, 1796. Babeuf and his party then endeavoured to seduce the police force, which contained a number of discontented revolutionists. In this they were successful, and arranged to destroy the Constitution. Again the Directory, being well informed, disbanded the police, disarming it by means of reliable troops. By no means discouraged, Babeuf and his followers now formed a third plan of attack. An "Insurrectionary Committee of Public Safety" was formed, having agents among the poorer classes of the twelve communes of Paris. Amar, Choudieu, Drouet, and Rossignol were

among Babeuf's lieutenants. Broken officers, superseded "patriots," and the remnants of the old Jacobins were the forces of the insurrection. The leaders assembled in a "Temple of Reason," where they seem to have sung laments for the death of Robespierre—a curious god for their worship.

The Army containing men of all shades, but especially a good many ex-Jacobins and ultra-revolutionaries, they seem to have discounted its loyalty and *esprit de corps*. Sounding the camp of Grenelle, they opened negotiations through a captain, one Grisel, who entered into their projects, probably in order to gain full information.

Babeuf intended to form a Convention of sixty-eight Montagnards, the remnant of the old Mountain, with an agent in every department; and, as regards the insurrection, to march upon the Legislature from various points on the same night, after covering the walls of Paris with proclamations concerning his intention of establishing the Constitution of 1793 (than which nothing can have been further from his thoughts) and the necessity of killing the "usurpers of the sovereignty"; and his further intention to attack and demolish the Legislature, and then to found a Utopia governed by pure and incorruptible democrats. The night was fixed, the proclamations at hand. On the day before that selected for the insurrection the chief conspirators were seized in their houses. In Babeuf's keeping were found all the documents connected with the plot. The details of the plot were communicated to the people by a proclamation on the part of the Directory. The people, remembering too well the rule of the Jacobins, were struck with terror and full of gratitude.

Babeuf shows the temper of his mind in the following proposal to the Directory: "Would you consider it beneath you to treat with me as two powers treat with one another? You see what immense confidence is centred in my person; you see my party may well balance your own in the scales; you know its vast ramifications. Five men, by showing themselves great and generous, may now save the country." The Directory published his letter, and sent him and his followers for trial in the high court of Vendôme. Before they were sentenced the rest of the party made an attempt of extraordinary fatuity, some seven hundred of them marching in arms to Grenelle (having once more sounded it); where, after alarming the sentries by a cry of "*Vive la Constitution de 1793!*" they made for the tent of the commander, Malo, who at once sounded the call to arms. His dragoons, half dressed, mounted and fell upon the democrats, who turned tail, leaving many dead and prisoners; thirty-one of the latter were condemned to death by military commission, thirty to transportation, and twenty-eight to imprisonment.

Babeuf and his accomplices then came to trial; they showed great

courage and a firm belief in the justice of their cause; seeming thereby all the more terrible to the public, who had been badly startled. Babeuf and another, on hearing the death sentence, stabbed themselves to death in court.

**Barère, Bertrand, de Vieuzac,** was born at Tarbes in 1755, and educated as an advocate; beginning his professional life in Toulouse. He was a deputy in the National Assembly, and was elected a member of Convention by the department of Hautes-Pyrénées.

Like so many other advocates of the time, he became a journalist, constituting himself the panegyrist of the Mountain. His part during the Terror is told by his *sobriquet*, the "Anacreon of the Guillotine."

President of the Convention at the trial of Louis XVI, he voted against the appeal to the people, voting in these words: "The law is for death; I am here only as the instrument of the law."

He was elected a member of the Committee of General Defence in January, 1793, and in April of the Committee of Public Safety, recciving the largest number of votes.

Originally a supporter of Robespierre, he took part in his downfall, as did so many of his erstwhile lieutenants; but his *rôle* as apologist of the Committee of Public Safety led to a sentence of transportation, which was not carried out before the amnesty. After the Restoration he was banished, and went to Brussels, returning upon the second revolution. In 1832 his old department elected him deputy once more; the election being declared void, he was made a member of the departmental administration. He died in 1841, at the age of 86.

Barère was a graceful writer of great imagination and the completest unveracity. One of his picturesque efforts, the account of the sinking of the *Vengeur* off Brest, deceived Carlyle, and was given in good faith in his first edition of the *French Revolution*. At the time this *tour de force* was firmly believed throughout France, and the supposed fact counted as one of the glories of French history. Barère's *Mémoires* were translated into English in 1897.

**Barras, Paul Jean Francois Nicolas, Comte de,** was born in 1855 at Fos-Emphoux, in Var, of an ancient and noble family. He was a soldier in early youth, serving in India against the English. On his return he lived in Paris. Soon after the outbreak of the Revolution he became a member of the Jacobins.

His home department sent him to the Convention. He voted for Louis' immediate execution. Although an enemy of Robespierre's, he was implicated in the fate of the Girondists.

At the siege of Toulon he commanded, and otherwise assisted in suppressing the South, with the cruelty of the typical Jacobin.

During the "days" of the *Thermidor* insurrection Barras was commander-in-chief of the Convention forces, and it was largely by his efforts that the day was carried and Robespierre overthrown. His suppression of the Terrorists did not show his former inhumanity; a fact not difficult to understand. He kept the royalists and Jacobins in check, and on the 13th of *Vendémiaire*, being once more appointed commander-in-chief by the Convention, his knowledge of Bonaparte's abilities, gained at the siege of Toulon, led to his appointing him his lieutenant, and virtual commander of the forces.

He was a member of the first Directory. During the *coup d'état* of *Fructidor* he was once more virtually a military dictator, and purged the Government of its royalist members.

Thenceforward his influence was paramount; but his old habits of dissipation reappeared, together with a worse trait—that of cupidity. He rapidly became unpopular. On November 9, 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte and Siéyès brought his virtual dictatorship to an end. He went from Paris to Brussels; thence to Marseilles; thence, being expelled, to Rome; finally to Montpellier, where he was more or less a prisoner, being under a close watch, as he was known as a royalist conspirator. He did not return to Paris until the Restoration, when he settled near the city, having preserved his enormous fortune, the result of "graft." He died in 1829. His *Mémoires* are translated.

# CHAPTER I

## PARTIES AND OPINIONS. GIRONDINS, MONTAGNARDS, DANTONISTS

(*September*, 1792—*July*, 1793)

I. Organisation of the Girondist party.—II. Its political programme. —III. Its leaders.—IV. Organisation and programme of the Montagnard party.—V. Its leaders.—VI. The conflict of the two parties.—VII. The fall of Danton.

DURING the first period of the history of the Democratic Republic—namely, until the defeat of Federalism —the National Convention was seen to be divided into two parties, the *Gironde* and the *Mountain;* the former more numerous and more influential than the latter, and drawing in its train, as a general thing, an indefinite mass of deputies known as the *Plain*, the *Stomach*, or the *Marsh*. The leaders of the Gironde were expelled from the Convention by the popular insurrection of June 2, 1793. Some were imprisoned in Paris. Others repaired to the provinces, and provoked a movement which culminated in civil war against the Convention, which they declared was reduced to a state of slavery; this movement being known as Federalism. The Mountain eventually triumphed, with its principal leader, Robespierre. But before its triumph another of its leaders, Danton, exercised an influence which was often preponderant in the trend of public affairs; either as Minister of Justice, as a simple deputy, or finally as a member of the Committee

of Public Safety. The actual principal in French diplomacy, he conducted secret negotiations with the rest of Europe with a view to peace, and laid the foundations from which the treaties of Basle were to rise long after his death. At home he followed an opportunist, temporising policy; seeking to conciliate the two opposing parties, to prevent their coming to blows, and later, to mitigate the consequences of their rupture. This was the Girondist and Dantonist period of the Democratic Republic.

## I.

Historians, rather than contemporaries, gave the collective name of the *Gironde* to the friends and followers of Brissot, Vergniaud, Mme. Roland, and Buzot. In the Legislative Assembly those deputies who sat on the left, below Chabot and Basire, called themselves the *Jacobin Patriots;* and their opponents called them derisively *Brissotins, Bordelais*, or the *Gaudet-Brissot gang*. In the Convention they were still *Brissotins*, but *Rolandists*, *Buzotins* as well. Marat ironically called them the *Statesmen*. By *Girondists* we understand more particularly Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonné, Grangeneuve, Ducos, Boyer-Fonfrède, Bergoeing, and Lacaze : all deputies of the department of the Gironde. Even at their trial the distinction was maintained between the Brissotins and the Girondists. Officially, their conquerors called them the *Federalists*, in order to justify, by a word, the violent procedure of June 2nd. I believe that Thiers and Charles Nodier were responsible for the custom of calling Girondists the deputies from other departments than the Gironde, such as Brissot, Buzot, Barbaroux, and Petion. Since 1847 Lamartine's *History of the Girondists* has rendered this name so popular that in order to be understood one must use the term *Gironde* to denote the *Right* of

the Convention, or even the *Left* of the Legislative Assembly.

The Girondist party dated, in fact, from the Legislative Assembly. It was Brissot who originally brought together Condorcet, Clavière, and Roland, and the deputies of the Gironde, and founded their alliance. "At the time of the convocation of the Legislative Assembly," he said at the Revolutionary Tribunal, "the deputies of the Gironde on arriving in Paris used to seek my friendship on account of my opinions respecting the Colonies.[1] We used to meet three times a week, before the hour at which the National Assembly opened its sessions." Very soon political breakfasts were held; almost daily indeed, at Number 5 in the Place Vendôme, a few steps from the Manège, at the house of one Dame Dudon, "an honest woman, rich, who could, without inconveniencing herself, lend them a spacious room of which they were free to make use even in her absence."[2] There Étienne Dumont met Brissot, Clavière, Roederer, Guadet, Gensonné, Vergniaud, Ducos, Condorcet, and others whom he does not name, but among whom was Fauchet. "Roland, whose good sense and integrity were at this time greatly valued, was invited to attend; but he hardly ever did so, on account of the distance." The same cause made Gensonné's visits very irregular.

"They came there before going on to the Assembly, argued upon their measures, and, as may be supposed, there was more chatter and party gossip than resolutions taken or procedure determined. Brissot was the practical man; his activity was equal to anything."[3]

Although Brissot was actually the leader and business man of this "Committee of the Place

[1] Paganel says that Brissot and his followers were at first known as the "defenders of the black man."

[2] Mme. Roland's *Mémoires*.

[3] Étienne Dumont, *Souvenirs*, p. 374.

Vendôme," which was to provide Louis XVI with the Roland-Dumouriez Ministry, there were, at the time of the Legislative Assembly, other meetings of the same group under another presidency. Thus Gensonné, in his defence before the Revolutionary Tribunal, said that they met at Vergniaud's three times a week ; and there, while debating, awaited the opening of the Assembly. Chabot, in his deposition before the same tribunal, spoke of meetings regularly held by " the faction " in the Rue d'Argenteuil, or at the house of Bernard (of Saintes). Again, the " Gironde " used to dine at Clavière's house ; but these were literary rather than political meetings, at which the poet Lebrun *Pindarised*.[1] Petion, being mayor, gave dinners to his political friends, at which the company would seem to have been decidedly mixed, according to Étienne Dumont, who was astonished to see the Marquis de Condorcet rubbing shoulders with the *sans-culotte* Chabot.

Thus the Gironde was already a party at the convocation of the Convention. On December 31, 1792, Marat denounced it from the tribune, saying " that the folk of Roland's faction hold secret meetings at the Palais-Royal, number 248, in order to concert the means of dismissing Pache from the Ministry of War." At the beginning of 1793 Bouquey, brother-in-law to Guadet, nominated by Roland steward of the Château of Saint-Cloud, was in the habit of receiving at his house Brissot, Vergniaud, Gensonné, Petion, Buzot, and others. These meetings were held three times a week, according to an accusation signed by Fréron. Brissot had obtained from Bouquey apartments in the granary of the château. Denounced for this reason, he immediately left; but his wife continued to live at Saint-Cloud. It was evidently he who arranged their meetings out of Paris, which were

[1] Étienne Dumont, *Souvenirs*, p. 448.

surrounded by mystery by the ingenious caution and suspicion of the times.

At the height of their struggle against the Mountain the Girondists attempted to improve their party organisation. This was the "liberticide conspiracy" denounced by Marat on May 23, 1793. "The Committee of General Security," he said, "has been impressed by a circular letter, written by Dufriche-Valazé to Jacaze, in which he invites the latter to repair to the Convention with as many colleagues as possible—that is to say, *statesmen*. Every one knows that the directorate of the *statesmen* of the liberticide faction is established at the house of Dufriche-Valazé." To this Valazé replied:

"This circular—I have written thirty-eight to forty similar ones—this circular ran as follows: *at the National Convention at ten in the morning with as many colleagues as possible.*" And he explained that it was a question of filling the benches on the Right as a provision against an insurrection on the part of the sections. "Many of my colleagues," he added, "animated by the purest love of country, habitually meet at my house.[1] Surely we shall not be forbidden to hold friendly meetings, especially when their object is the defeat of conspiracy."

We find that some forty of the Girondists belonged to this "Valazé Committee"; about fifteen were present at the meetings, which were held nightly, according to Meillan; according to Valazé himself, three or four times a week; sometimes only once. The most assiduous were Brissot, Guadet, Gensonné, Buzot, Barbaroux, Bergoeing, Duprat, Lacaze, Lesage, Mollevaut, Hardy, Salle, Deperret, Chambon, Lidon. Their object was "to prepare the discussions" which were to take place in the Convention. Thus Louvet tells us, in his memoirs, that the "Valazé Committee" entrusted him with the delivery of a speech upon the popular movement of March 10, 1793.

[1] No. 18, Rue d'Orléans-Saint-Honoré.

It would seem that we have here one of the most serious attempts made at this period to create a party in the English sense of the word. Yet it was not until Marat came across one of their notices of convocation that the Girondists realised what they were doing. Some few months earlier Brissot, in one of his pamphlets, wrote :

"No, you do not know those you are calumniating, you who accuse the Girondists of belonging to a faction. Guadet has too proud a spirit ; Vergniaud possesses in too high a degree the indifference that goes with talent, and which forces it to stand alone ; Ducos has too much wit and honesty ; Gensonné is too profound a thinker, ever to stoop to fight under the banner of any chief. Certainly they have a centre, a focus ; but it is the love of liberty and reason ; they have ties, but they are those which unite fellow-workers whose tastes are alike, in their simplicity and purity, and whose opinions are dictated by reflection."[1]

"We were so little disposed," said Meillan, "to form a party,[2] that the mere thought of a concerted measure revolted us. Each of us wished to be independent, and to shape his conduct after his own heart. We always hoped that the wise and truthful writings of some among us would suffice to enlighten the people, and above all we wished to avoid the reproach of forming a party. Instead of mutually binding ourselves together, we seemed to avoid one another ; in a word, we had no points of contact but conformity of principle and love of the public good. These motives have necessarily made us act and speak in the same manner, but not in concert. Even at Caen, when we were only a few in number, our conduct had no uniformity except when we had no choice in the matter."

With greater reason they constantly refused to recognise a leader. Valazé himself, the "Cato of the Gironde," was the host and not the director of the Committee. As for Brissot, although he assiduously attended all meetings, from those of the Place Vendôme down to Valazé's political *soirées*, and although he undertook

[1] *À tous les républicains de France*, p. 9.

[2] Boyer-Fonfrède said, in the Convention, on March 15, 1793 : "I belong to no party ; I refuse to belong to any man ; I belong to my conscience and my country."

the management of practical affairs, and, at one period, directed his friends as far as they could be directed, his authority was neither avowed by himself, nor recognised by the very men who did nothing without consulting him.

Another influence, one which was continually increasing its hold on the Girondist party, and which finally became preponderant, was that of Mme. Roland. She herself confessed, in her memoirs, that during the two ministries of her husband she was his collaborator.

"I did not," she says, "meddle in administrative matters; but if it was a question of a circular letter, of instructions, of a public and important statement, we conferred on the matter with the mutual interdependence which had become a habit with us; and I, steeped in his ideas and nourished on my own, held the pen which I had more time than he to use."

It was she who drafted the public documents, and was responsible for the general political writings, which emanated in such numbers from her husband, and which may be read as manifestoes of the Girondist party. Her influence was not merely secret. Twice a week she gave a dinner to Ministers and deputies, as she tells us in her memoirs. She admits that the company addressed themselves to her.

"It often happened," she says, "that friends or colleagues who required to speak to the Minister in confidence, instead of seeking him at his work, where his clerks and the public surrounded him, would come to me and beg me to send then for him. I thus found myself in the stream of things without intrigue and without idle curiosity. Roland thenceforth had an understanding with me that he would discuss matters with me in private with the confidence which has always reigned between us, and which has made our knowledge and opinions in common. It also used to happen that friends who wished only to give information, to speak a word or two, being always sure of finding me, would come to me and ask me to tell him at the earliest possible moment."

This was well known. When the motion was proposed in the Convention to invite Roland to remain in the Ministry, on September 29, 1792, Danton said :

"No one does Roland more justice than myself ; but this I will say : If you invite him, invite Mme. Roland also ; for every one knows that Roland was not alone in his department. As for me, I was alone in mine (*murmurs*)."

The importance of Mme. Roland's part in the Girondist party was due not only to the fact that she led her husband ; it was also, and more especially, due to the fact that she influenced Buzot, to whom she was bound by a passionate love. Through Buzot she influenced Petion, and these two men turned against Robespierre, with whom they had formed a famous trio under the Constituent Assembly. Barbaroux and Guadet were under the spell. Brissot, who at the outset had organised Mme. Roland's influence, remained himself her subject. Vergniaud and Condorcet escaped it to a large extent. But when they considered their friend insulted by Danton, when they heard "Father Duchesne" bullying her, they could no longer hold out against this woman, who inspired them not only with her dislikes and indignations, but also with a heroic stoicism, and the desire and the power to die nobly.

At the end of their career, in the desperate moments of their struggle against the Mountain, when nothing was left for them but a worthy death, they gathered all the more around her who never trembled ; who never counselled cowardly, nor even prudent transactions ; who, her head full of Plutarch and of Rousseau, taught them to smile at death, and saved them at need from the secret anguish of their hearts. It was for these reasons that in supreme moments the memory of Mme. Roland was for the Girondists a religion which united them ; some until the scaffold, some until their final dispersal. They loved one another

through her ; they call themselves, in their memoirs, *the friends*, as if their association were sentimental rather than political. For posterity, as for contemporaries, the Girondists were a party led by a woman.

Personal statistics of the Girondists are not easy to establish. The roll-calls of the trial of Louis XVI give us no information in this respect, since the Girondists were not agreed upon the penalty to be inflicted, nor even upon the appeal to the people. The roll-call which took place during the session of April 13 and 14, 1793, when the question of Marat's impeachment was before the Assembly, tells us that out of 360 voters 220 voted for the decree of accusation; 92 voted against it ; 41 declared they had no feeling in the matter ; 7 demanded an adjournment. But are we to conclude that there were 220 Girondists in the Convention? No ; for the Centre voted with the Gironde. On the other hand, at this time a large number of members were away " on mission " ; so that this roll-call gives us no definitive information relating to the respective strength of the two parties. We find more important data for the statistics of the party in the decree of June 2, 1793, which ordered the arrest of 29 deputies ; in that of July 28, by which 20 deputies were declared traitors to the country ; and in that of October 3, by which 41 deputies were betrayed to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and 75 [1] put under arrest, as signatories to protests against the doings of May 31st and June 2nd. In all 129 deputies were affected by these measures : for many of the names figure in all three decrees. Other deputies were the object of measures of individual punishment, or signed protests, or publicly expressed their sympathy for those proscribed ; and it seems to me that these deputies, who numbered some 36, might and should be classed among the

[1] On account of two printer's errors in the list of these 75 as published in the journals, these deputies have been called the 73.

Girondists. To sum up, we find that of 165 deputies we may say, without much chance of error, that they were all members of the Gironde. Here is the alphabetical list of these 165, with an indication of the department which each represented at the Convention.

1. Amyon (Jura).
2. Andréi (Corsica).
3. Antibout (Var).
4. Asselin (Somme).
5. Aubry (Gard).
6. Babey (Jura).
7. Bailleul (Seine-Inférieure).
8. Bancal des Issards (Puy-de-Dôme).
9. Barbaroux (Bouches-du-Rhône).
10. Belin (Aisne).
11. Bergoeing (Gironde).
12. Bertrand de la Hosdinière (Orne).
13. Birotteau (Pyrénées-Orientales).
14. Blad (Finistère).
15. Blanqui (Alpes-Maritimes).
16. Blaux (Moselle).
17. Blaviel (Lot).
18. Bohan (Finistère).
19. Boilleau (Yonne).
20. Bonet (Haute-Loire).
21. Bouchereau (Aisne).
22. Boyer-Fonfrède (Gironde).
23. Bresson (Vosges).
24. Brissot (Eure-et-Loir).
25. Buzot (Eure).
26. Carra (Saône-et-Loire).
27. Casenave (Basses-Pyrénees).
28. De Cazeneuve (Hautes-Alpes).
29. Chambon (Corrèze).
30. Chasset (Rhône-et-Loire).
31. Chastellain (Yonne).
32. Condorcet (Aisne).
33. Corbel (Morbihan).
34. Couppé (Côtes-du-Nord).
35. Coustard (Loire-Inférieure).
36. Cussy (Calvados).
37. Dabray (Alpes-Maritimes).
38. Daunou (Pas-de-Calais).
39. Jean de Bry (Aisne).
40. Dechézeaux (Charente-Inférieure).
41. Defermon (Ille-et-Vilaine).
42. Delahaye (Seine-Inférieure).
43. Delamare (Oise).
44. Delecloy (Somme).
45. Derazey (Indre).
46. Descamps (Gers).
47. Deverité (Somme).
48. Doublet (Seine-Inférieure).
49. Doulcet de Pontécoulant (Calvados).
50. Dubusc (Eure).
51. Duchastel (Deux-Sèvres).
52. Ducos (Gironde).
53. Dufestel (Somme).
54. Dufriche-Valazé (Orne).
55. Dugué d'Assé (Orne).
56. Dulaure (Puy-de-Dôme).
57. Dupin (Aisne).
58. Duprat (Bouches-du-Rhône).
59. Dusaulx (Paris).
60. Duval (Seine-Inférieure).
61. Estadens (Haute-Garonne).
62. Fauchet (Calvados).
63. Faure (Seine-Inférieure).
64. Faye (Haute-Vienne).
65. Fayolle (Drôme).
66. Ferroux (Jura).
67. Fiquet (Aisne).
68. Fleury (Côtes-du-Nord).

69. François (Somme).
70. Gamon (Ardèche).
71. Gantois (Somme).
72. Gardien (Indre-et-Loire).
73. Garilhe (Ardèche).
74. Gensonné (Gironde).
75. Girault (Côtes-du-Nord).
76. Gomaire (Finistère).
77. Gorsas (Seine-et-Oise).
78. Grangeneuve (Gironde).
79. Grenot (Jura).
80. Guadet (Gironde).
81. Guiter (Pyrenées-Orientales).
82. Hardy (Seine-Inférieure).
83. Hecquet (Seine-Inférieure).
84. Henry-Larivière (Calvados).
85. Isnard (Var.).
86. Jary (Loire-Inférieure).
87. Kersaint (Seine-et-Oise).
88. Kervélégan (Finistere).
89. Lacaze (Gironde).
90. Lacroix (Haute-Vienne).
91. Lanjuinais (Ille-et-Vilaine).
92. Lanthenas (Rhône-et-Loire).
93. Laplaigne (Gers).
94. La Revellière-Lépeaux (Maine-et-Loire).
95. Lasource (Tarn).
96. Laurence (Manche).
97. Laurenceot (Jura).
98. Lauze-Deperret (Bouches-du-Rhône).
99. Le Breton (Ille-et-Vilaine).
100. Le Carlier (Aisne).
101. Leclerc (Maine-et-Loire).
102. Le Febvre (Loire-Inférieure).
103. Lefebvre (Seine-Inférieure).
104. Lehardi (Morbihan).
105. Lemaignan (Maine-et-Loire).
106. Lesage (Eure-et-Loir).
107. Lesterpt-Beauvais (Haute-Vienne).
108. Lidon (Corrèze).
109. Loiseau (Eure-et-Loir).
110. Loysel (Aisne).
111. Louvet (Loiret).
112. Louvet (Somme).
113. Maisse (Basses-Alpes).
114. Manuel (Paris).
115. Marbos (Drôme).
116. Martin-Saint-Romain (Somme).
117. Massa (Alpes-Maritimes).
118. Masuyer (Saône-et-Loire).
119. Meillan (Basses-Pyrénées).
120. Mercier (Seine-et-Oise).
121. Michel (Morbihan).
122. Minvielle (Bouches-du-Rhône).
123. Mollevaut (Meurthe).
124. Moyset (Gers).
125. Noël (Vosges).
126. Obelin (Ille-et-Vilaine).
127. Olivier-Gérente (Drôme).
128. Tom Paine (Pas-de-Calais).
129. Périès (Aude).
130. Petit (Aisne).
131. Petion (Eure-et-Loir).
132. Peyre (Basses-Alpes).
133. Philippe-Delleville (Calvados).
134. Pilastre (Maine-et-Loire).
135. Queinnec (Finistère).
136. Rabaut-Pomier (Gard).
137. Rabaut Saint-Étienne (Aube).
138. Rebecquy (Bouches-du-Rhône).
139. Ribereau (Charente).
140. Richou (Eure).
141. Rivaud (Haute-Vienne).
142. Rivery (Somme).
143. Rouault (Morbihan).
144. Rouyer (Hérault).
145. Rouzet (Haute-Garonne).
146. Royer (Ain).
147. Ruault (Seine-Inférieure).
148. Saint-Martin-Valogne (Aveyron).

149. Saladin (Somme).
150. Salle (Meurthe).
151. Salmon (Sarthe).
152. Saurine (Landes).
153. Savary (Eure).
154. Serre (Hautes-Alpes).
155. Sillery (Somme).
156. Soubeyran de Saint-Prix (Ardèche).
157. Soulignac (Haute-Vienne).
158. Tournier (Aude).
159. Vallée (Eure).
160. Varlet (Pas-de-Calais).
161. Vergniaud (Gironde).
162. Vernier (Jura).
163. Viger (Maine-et-Loire).
164. Vincent (Seine-Inférieure).
165. Yzarn-Valady (Aveyron).

These statistics, as we may see, do not confirm the often repeated assertion that the party of the Gironde represented the south. The Meridionals were in the minority in the Girondist party. As a matter of sober fact the forces of this party were not concentrated in a definite and particular district. In May, 1793, there were Girondists in almost all quarters. They were least numerous in the north-east, and in the ancient Ile de France. They were most numerous in Provence, Guyenne, Limousin, Brittany, Normandy, and Picardy —in the south and the north-west. But in none of these regions (in so far as they were represented by certain groups of departments) did they form the majority of the national representation. They were even in the minority in all the departments save eight ; the Gironde, Somme, Seine-Inférieure, Aisne, Haute-Vienne, Ardèche, Finistère, and the Jura. Nowhere, not even in the Gironde, did they number all the representatives ; this latter department sent to the Convention, together with eight "Girondists," two Montagnards—Garrau and Jay (of Saint-Foy) ; and two of indefinite colour—Duplantier and Deleyre. Buzot's department, Eure, was represented by six Montagnards and five Girondists ; and Brissot's, Eure-et-Loir, by five Montagnards and four Girondists ; Barbaroux', the Bouches-du-Rhône, by seven Montagnards and five Girondists. On the other hand, some Girondists were returned by the Jacobin departments ; in Meurthe, the Vosges, Indre-et-Loire, Seine-et-Oise, and in Paris. No

Girondist deputy was returned by any of the following twenty-eight departments: Allier, Ardennes, Ariège, Cantal, Cher, Côte-d'Or, Creuse, Dordogne, Doubs, Isère, Loir-et-Cher, Lot-et-Garonne, Lozère, Marne, Haute-Marne, Mayenne, Meuse, Mont-Blanc, Mont-Terrible, Nièvre, Nord, Hautes-Pyrénées, Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin, Haute-Saône, Seine-et-Marne, Vendée, and Vienne.

## II.

It is not easy to perceive precisely how the Girondists, in the matter of principles and essential ideas, differed from the Montagnards. In reading their speeches, their pamphlets, and their journals, one can distinguish scarcely any difference between their ideals and their respective faiths. In religion, the Girondists were deists; some after the fashion of Voltaire, some after the fashion of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Nearly all lived the lives of philosophers. Concerning the attitude of many of the Girondists at the moment of death we have the testimony of the Abbé Lothringer; who, in a letter published by the *Républicain français* of the 6th of *Fructidor* in the year V, relates how he attended on the Girondists condemned by the Revolutionary Tribunal. Lothringer confessed Fauchet, who in turn confessed Sillery. Others, Lauze-Deperret, Gardien, Lesterpt-Beauvais, Lehardi, Viger, also confessed; but it was otherwise with the flower of the Girondists, with Brissot, Vergniaud, Carra, Ducos, Boyer-Fonfrède; these did not confess. But, on the other hand, we do not find that the leaders of the Mountain, Danton and Robespierre, had recourse to a priest before death.

Robespierre reproached the Girondists with being atheists. It was an old quarrel, which dated from the time of the Legislative Assembly. Isnard had said, on November 14, 1791, in a speech in which he pro-

posed to punish all factious persons : " I say all factious persons, because I am determined to fight them all, because I am of no party. My God is the Law : I have no other." He then recanted, in a public letter ; saying that he had only spoken " in a political sense "; that he was not an atheist. " I have contemplated Nature," he said, " and I am not an imbecile ; I must perforce believe in God." Another incident, better known and of greater weight, was the quarrel between Guadet and Robespierre at the Jacobin Club, on March 26, 1792. Robespierre, in a proposal for an address, had spoken of " the Providence which is always watching over us, far more than our own wisdom." Guadet became impatient :

"I have heard the word 'Providence' frequently repeated in this address ; I believe it is even said that Providence has saved us despite ourselves. I must admit that I, seeing no sense in this idea, should never have believed it possible that a man who has worked so courageously for three years to free the people from the slavery of despotism would then assist in pushing them back into the slavery of superstition (*uproar, disapproval, and applause*)."

Robespierre replied with the bitterness of a wounded devotee. He wanted to induce the club to vote that God, Providence, and the future life were the bases of its policy. The question of printing his speech, which was alternately put forward and repulsed, was about to be put to the vote, when a friend of the Girondists, Sonthonax, cried out : " No monkishness, Mr. President ! " There was an uproar, and the session closed without voting.

After the assembling of the Convention, this quarrel became more accentuated. On December 5th, Robespierre having fulminated against the philosophers at the Jacobins, and caused the bust of Helvetius to be broken, Brissot immediately wrote in praise of Helvetius, in his *Patriote*. When the deputy Jacob Dupont declared himself an atheist at the tribune (on Decem-

ber 14, 1792), his speech was praised by the same *Patriote* in the most heartfelt terms, with a host of epigrammatic remarks upon Robespierre's speech. And when André Pomme, on April 17, 1793, demanded that the Convention, in the first article of the new Declaration of Rights, should "expressly recognise the existence of the Supreme Being," the Girondist Louvet (of Loiret) moved that the Chamber should proceed to the general orders of the day.

Were the Girondists, then, atheists? By no means. Vergniaud, in his speech on the war (January 17, 1792), had urged the patriots "not to neglect the occasion *that Providence afforded them.*" Brissot and Louvet, in their memoirs, incessantly invoke "Divinity," "Providence," and "the just God." Brissot also proclaims himself a deist in his memoirs.

They differed from Robespierre in this: Robespierre accepted intact the "civil religion" of Rousseau, with all its dogmas, and was doubtless already dreaming of making it the national religion of France; the Girondists accepted only the dogma of the existence of God, and it is obvious that their deism was only a denial of the God of the Catholic Church. In this they differed from Robespierre only, and not from the Montagnards, among whom Couthon alone perhaps was addicted to dreams of a State religion, and the cult of the Supreme Being, which haunted the imagination of Robespierre.

One might perhaps say that the Girondists had a religious policy which was more elevated but less impassioned than that of the Montagnards. In the Legislative Assembly Gensonné seemed to own as his ideal the separation of Church and State (see his speech of November 3, 1791), and Guadet stated that it was necessary "to become accustomed to separate religion from the Constitution" (see his speech of November 25th). Ducos had even stated, on October 26th

preceding: " . . . I believe I have solved the problem; separate from all that concerns the State all that concerns religion." Bancal des Issards, the friend of Mme. Roland, was an ardent advocate of the secularising of public education, and his proposed decree of December 24, 1792, excluded the clergy and religion from the schools. Generally speaking, perhaps, the idea of a secular State, which so far was by no means popular, was conceived and adopted by the Girondists more unanimously and more promptly than by the Montagnards. But we are dealing here with "fine shades"; in essentials I can perceive no difference between the religious opinions of the Girondists and those of the Montagnards in general; I can only see it between the religious opinions of the Girondists and Robespierre in particular.

Did they differ from their adversaries in matters of politics proper? The Montagnards accused them of royalism. In the accusation which the Committee of General Security launched against them in the person of Amar, on October 3, 1793, we read: "They were republicans under the monarchy and royalists under the Republic." We have already seen to what extent some of them—Brissot, Condorcet, and Paine—were republicans under the monarchy. Under the Republic it was Buzot who was responsible for the decree of December 4, 1792, which punished with death all proposals to re-establish the monarchy. It is impossible to find evidence of a single word, action, or line written, performed, or spoken by the Girondists in the period from August 10, 1792, to June 2, 1793, which tends, even indirectly, to favour royalty. The Girondists gained over to their party the most illustrious of the founders of the Republic: Condorcet. Even during the time of the civil war, in June and July, 1793, their leaders, as a whole, refused to form a compact with the royalists. At Caen, Petion suddenly broke up the

meeting at which General Wimpffen, throwing off the mask, proposed to ask England for a king.

"I could have wished," he says in his *Mémoires*, "that the cowards who slandered us so perfidiously, and who, in the depths of their hearts, did us justice, might have been present at this meeting, and indeed at all our conferences, even our most secret gatherings; they would have been able to judge whether the Republic had any more zealous supporters."

As good republicans as the Montagnards, were they less democratic? We have seen that the projected Constitution presented by Condorcet was fully as democratic as that which was later known as the Montagnard Constitution. It has been said that the Girondins were in favour of an aristocracy of talent. True; it is possible that they hoped to see a dictatorship of persuasion, a Periclean tyranny. But was not this the very idea of Robespierre? They dreamed, it has been said, of an Athenian republic, while the Montagnards dreamed of a Spartan republic. These are phrases: the words and actions of Danton, of Robespierre, of Saint-Just, of Barère, prove that they were all equally anxious to embellish the Republic by means of the arts as were, or had been, Vergniaud, Condorcet, or Mme. Roland. But we must understand that when the people of Paris applauded *Père Duchesne* for representing Mme. Roland as a toothless hag, when they became sensible that their party was unpopular in Paris because it was directed by a woman, the Girondists came little by little to have a horror of the mob. The populace was pure and intelligent in 1792, when it applauded the Girondists; in 1793, now that it hissed them, "its *morale* had been entirely perverted."[1] They had not the art of leading the people by speaking to its conscience; and one of them spoke more truly than he knew, when he said ironically of

[1] Buzot's *Mémoires*.

his adversaries: "It must be granted that they have understood better than we the mass of the people whom they govern; its character, its particular genius, and the degree of energy and of enlightenment of which it is capable." [1] Save Petion and Brissot, who were perhaps the least aristocratic of them all, contact with the people embarrassed and disgusted them, almost without exception towards the end of their career. See how Buzot, during his proscription, speaks of the popular deputations:

"I know how necessary it was to be patient; but a thousand times I was taken by surprise with the longing to blow out the brains of some of these monsters. Great God, what deputations they were! It was as though some one had searched through all the gutters of Paris and the great cities for all that was most hideous, foulest, and most noisome. Villainous, filthy faces, black, or the colour of leather, surmounted by great mops of greasy hair, with eyes sunk half-way through their heads, they filled the place with their nauseating breath, giving vent to the grossest insults, and screaming like carnivorous beasts." [2]

Doubtless Mme. Roland was in part responsible for, or at least had accentuated, this egoistical delicacy, these shrinkings of a distinguished refinement. She extolled an ideal people, who had nothing in common with the real people, who scoffed brutally at these hyperæsthetic manners. It was easy for the Montagnards (although their manners were as *bourgeois* [3] as those of the Girondists) to represent such people of refinement as enemies of the people. The Girondists were labelled and lost by the aristocratic quality of their attitude, of their tastes, almost of their skins. We may say that although their ideas were as democratic as those of the Montagnards, their manners were not.

[1] Buzot's *Mémoires*. [2] Buzot.

[3] *Bourgeois* as used here, relating to this period, has a meaning totally different to—almost, indeed, the opposite of—that which common usage gives it now.—[TRANS.]

It is a commonplace saying that the Montagnards were bloodthirsty, while the Girondists were merciful. Sainte-Beuve, speaking of the friends of Mme. Roland, salutes "these noble figures; humane, of a fine moral balance; who one and all halted, from a Divine instinct and with a cry of pity, upon the shores of the river of blood."[1] This is a legend. I do not know that the Girondists were not the first to have recourse to the guillotine. It was the Girondist Isnard who, in the Legislative Assembly, on October 31, 1791, expounded the idea that it was necessary to kill the enemies of liberty, and he resumed the subject in these terms on November 14th following: "In matters of political liberty to pardon a crime is almost to share it. (*Applause.*) Such rigour may result in blood being shed, I know; but if you do not employ it, will not still more be shed? Would not civil war be a still greater disaster? The gangrened part must be excised to save the rest of the body." It was Isnard again who, a few days later (November 29th), let fall these terrible words: "By the word 'responsibility' we understand death." On December 26, 1791, Gensonné demanded the maintenance of the Constitution *or death*. It was Barbaroux who sketched the first idea of the law of suspects, when he cried, on September 26, 1792: "I demand that every person who despairs of the safety of the Republic shall be punished by death." On December 4, 1792, Buzot obtained the vote of the death penalty against royalty.

Never did the Girondists propose the true test of clemency: the abolition of the death penalty in matters political. On the contrary: Condorcet declared to the Convention, on January 19, 1793: "Abolish the death penalty for all private misdemeanours, while reserving your decision as to whether it must be kept for offences against the State; because in that case

[1] Introduction to Mme. Roland's letters to *Bancal des Issards*, p. xxi.

the question is different; considerations enter into it which cannot be weighed otherwise." And in a speech on February 23rd he says that the death penalty is abolished for private misdemeanours, but that it must still be maintained for political offences; and he confines himself to recommending that it should be applied rarely and not unscrupulously. Lastly, Boyer-Fonfrède, on June 17, 1793, while his friends were in prison, demanded the abolition of the death penalty, *except in political matters*.

It was the Girondist Petion who first formally declared that defeated parties should perish. "I wish," he said at the session of April 12, 1793, "that one might begin by writing accusations, that the replies should be written, and that every one should submit to risk his head that those of the guilty might fall." When, at last, the first to break the *talisman of inviolability*,[1] the Girondists sent Marat before the Revolutionary Tribunal, did they not believe that they were sending him to his death?

There is no doubt that the Girondists execrated the September massacres, which the Jacobin Club and many of the Montagnards justified. But what was the date of this difference of opinion? It was not at the time of the massacres, nor immediately afterwards; at that time both parties were agreed in excusing the assassins. This excuse is put forward openly in the journals of Gorsas and of Dulaure. The *Chronique de Paris*, to which Condorcet contributed, experiences only a *painful impression* (September 4th). It justifies everything by speaking of royalist conspiracies. "It seems," says this journal, "that there were fresh conspiracies on the point of culmination." In the issue of September 6th we read: "There was no longer any doubt as to the conspiracy to arm the criminals detained in the prisons during the absence of those citizens who

[1] An expression of Paganel's.

have proceeded to the frontiers." The Government organ, the *Moniteur*, for September 6th, relates the facts without emotion, without a word of blame, with words of praise for the generosity of the people. On September 3rd Roland, then Minister of the Interior, wrote to the Legislative Assembly :

"Yesterday was a day over whose events we must perhaps draw a veil ; I know that the people, terrible in its anger, yet in anger preserves a species of justice ; it does not seize as its victims all those who encounter its fury ; it directs its vengeance upon those whom it considers the sword of the law has spared too long ; those whom the peril of the circumstances persuades it should be destroyed without delay. But I know it is easy for scoundrels and traitors to take advantage of this effervescence, and that it must be checked."

*The popular effervescence must be checked because it might be abused!* So it was Roland's opinion that on September 3rd it had not as yet been *abused!* The massacres continued until the 6th, and on the 13th Roland declared, in a proclamation to the Parisians :

"I admired the men of the 10th of August ; I have trembled as to the consequences of the 2nd of September ; I judged well what the long-tried, much-deceived patience of the people and its justice would result in ; I did not unthinkingly blame the terrible first movement, but I judged that it was necessary to prevent its continuation ; that those who laboured to perpetuate it were betrayed by their imagination or by cruel and malevolent men."

Petion, Mayor of Paris, expressed himself in almost the same terms. On September 16th, from the tribune, Vergniaud protested, not against what he called the proscriptions, but against those who advised their continuance. On the 22nd, when he denounced the circular of the Committee of Surveillance of the Commune, in which the departments were invited to follow the example of Paris, he denied any intention of blaming the *executioners* of the Abbaye and La Force.

"In the fact that the people, tired of a long sequence of treasons,

should at last have risen, and should have indulged in a startling vengeance, *I see only a legitimate insurrection;* and if in this vengeance they have committed excesses which seemed to have been provoked by the police, I see in their excesses only the crime of those who provoked them."

*Legitimate insurrection!* This is how the greatest orator of the Gironde describes the massacres; and, following Roland's example, he has no blame except for their continuation, and their extension to the departments. As the circular of the Committee of Surveillance of the Commune was sent under the countersign of the Minister of Justice, it was Danton whom the Girondists held responsible for the proposal to prolong and extend the massacres. Then, seeing that this accusation resulted in a sympathetic indignation, they held Danton and the Montagnards responsible for the massacres, which they began to condemn and to execrate with oratorical virulence; till on January 20, 1793, Kersaint, Gensonné, and Barbaroux obtained decrees to the effect that the "Septemberers" should be proceeded against.[1] From that time until their fall, forgetting their first declarations, Roland's letter, and the words of Vergniaud, Mme. Roland's friends used to hurl at the heads of the Montagnards the insult: *September!* When Danton held out his hand to them, they feigned to see the blood on it, and repulsed him, saying, *September!* No pact with Septemberers: that, after January, 1793, was the motto of the Girondist party. To sum up: at the outset their impressions and opinions of the massacres of September were the same as those of the Montagnards; then, by policy, they began to wax indignant over the

[1] It is possible that when the excitement and panic were over, when they had realised clearly who the victims were, and could review the whole matter in cold blood, the Girondists did conceive a just and genuine horror of the massacres. Mme. Roland, too, may gradually have influenced their attitude.—[TRANS.]

massacres, and brought them up against their adversaries.[1] These tactics have to a certain extent deceived posterity, which has beheld in the Girondists the party of clemency and humanity. In sober reality the Girondists, face to face with bloodshed, in the presence of the people killing its enemies, felt no more indignation than did the Montagnards.

What was the real object of the quarrel between the Girondists and the Montagnards? You are Federalists, said the Montagnards to the Girondists, while we stand for the Republic one and indivisible. The Girondists protested loudly against this accusation.[2] Was it not one of the most important among them, Barbaroux, who, in the electoral assembly of the Bouches-du-Rhône, had definitely condemned the "federative type of government"? Could we cite a single Girondist responsible for a federalist action, or manifesting federalist tendencies? Who, then, did preach Federal-

[1] This attitude, its very probability, would seem to show at least their comparative innocence. Also they may have feared to speak plainly at the outset; and it is perhaps a little unjust not to remember that even if in moments of excitement they were merely Frenchmen, that is, excitable and prone to panic and wild reprisals, we have no right to conclude that after reflection and full knowledge they may not have felt a genuine horror. I cannot say if there is proof that they did so; but it would have been strange if the flower of intellectual France had not suffered such a change of feeling.—[TRANS.]

[2] In November, 1792, in a pamphlet entitled *Neither Marat nor Roland*, Anacharsis Clootz declared: "The royalists and the federalists are about to excite the secret jealousy of the principalities against the *great city*, by insinuating that Paris wants to be *King of France*. They conclude therefrom naturally that the House of Bourbon is preferable to a communal building, and that federalism is better than subjection." And he accused, by name, Roland, Kersaint, Guadet, and Brissot of being federalists. Roland, in reply, declared himself an upholder of the "sole Republic." Kersaint said: "I uphold the unity of the Republic." Guadet protested also, almost in the same words. Brissot said: "In two words, my system is this: unity of the departments of France, extension to the limits prescribed by nature; beyond that, a girdle of federative republics, not a universal republic."

ism to France? Was it not two Montagnards, Billaud-Varenne in 1791 and Lavicomterie in 1793? We read in Buzot's *Mémoires:*

"I am not attempting to conceal my opinions. The Republic was only possible in France (supposing we had possessed the moral qualities we lacked) in a form closely resembling the government of the United States. But never did either our actions or our speeches suggest any attempt to naturalise the American government in France."

That is to say, Buzot had a theoretical preference for federalism, but he did nothing to realise it. If we are to believe Mme. Roland's *Mémoires*, he owned to this preference in private ; and an English friend of the Girondists, Miss Helena Williams, writes as follows :

"I have often been present at conversations between Vergniaud and Lasource on this subject ; they saw too late the folly and danger of an indivisible republic composed of a people which professed itself republican the moment it had escaped from slavery. . . . My opinion is that the Girondists hoped for good results from the immediate and local action of small federative republics, hoped to form and elevate the people, to enlighten it, and to inspire it with sentiments more consistent with the duration of its political rights. They often spoke of republics bounded by the course of the Loire and the Rhône, having Lyons or Bordeaux as their centre."

I do not know how much of this is true. But two things are certain : it was at the outset that the Girondists passed as Federalists ; it was afterwards that they continually declared themselves partisans of the unitarian Republic.

And this is the essential difference, or rather the only real difference, between the Montagnards and the Girondists : the former wished to see Paris provisionally, during the war, at the head of the united Republic, as the ruling capital ; the latter, on the contrary, did not wish Paris to exert any supremacy over the de-

partments, even in war-time. This was the actual cause of the quarrel. Lasource summed it up at the tribune of the Convention, on September 25, 1792, in these memorable terms: "The influence of Paris must be reduced to one eighty-third of the whole, as is the case with the other departments."[1] On September 30th Roland, then Minister of the Interior, wrote to the Convention, in a letter which nearly all the journals published:

"Certainly Paris has served the cause of liberty well; and it is on this account that we must not allow the blind and the perverse to stifle and fetter it in the name of the people whom they are abusing: it is for this reason that Paris must reduce her influence to her eighty-third share, for a greater influence might cause alarm, and nothing would be more harmful to Paris than the discontent or distrust of the departments."[2]

Not obtaining this "reduction of Paris," the Girondists wished to *federate* the departments against Paris, and later they attempted civil war with this

[1] Here is the complete passage: "I here declare plainly that I shall vote in favour of the co-operation of all the departments in providing the Guard of the Legislative Assembly. I fear the despotism of Paris, and I do not wish to see those who prescribe the opinions of the men they lead astray dominating the National Convention and the whole of France. I do not wish to see Paris, led by intriguers, becoming to the French Empire what Rome was to the Roman Empire. The influence of Paris must be reduced to one eighty-third of the whole, as is the case with the other departments. Never will I bow beneath its yoke; never will I consent that she shall tyrannise over the Republic, as is the wish of certain intriguers against whom I am the first to dare to protest because I will never be dumb before any kind of tyrant" (*Moniteur*, reprint, xiv. 41).

[2] Doubtless the Girondists felt that the Assembly should rule; not a city mob. It must be remembered that the Commune of Paris was usurping the power of the Convention, so that the desire for federation (apart from the many and obvious advantages of the federal system) was also a desire to retain the executive power where it belonged, in the national elective Assembly. Again, as long as the power of Paris was preponderant, the power of the mob was excessive, and it was obvious that the dregs of one city should not rule an empire.—[TRANS.]

object in view. It is for this reason perhaps that they deserve the title of Federalists, although they had not really made any attempt to Americanise France by establishing eighty-three federated republics. To make war upon Paris; to deprive her of her character of ruling capital; this was the real policy of the Gironde, and this is where the Gironde differed from the Mountain.

The Girondists had not always feared and hated Paris. Mme. Roland wrote to Bancal, on July 30, 1790:

"Once more, Paris alone could have made this vigorous sally; it was for her imperious demand alone, like the voice of the Creator, to evoke light from the womb of chaos, and to force the Assembly to tear the veil which hid the iniquity of the mysteries of finance; to compel it to take advantage of the responsibility of the Ministers, and to make a notorious example of the infamous Tartufe who had abused the confidence of a too generous and enthusiastic nation."

At the end of May, 1792, Gensonné proposed a law which, legalising municipal dictatorships, would leave Paris supreme. Some Girondists never had any ill-feeling against Paris. Vergniaud always loved Paris. Petion, who suffered so greatly from the injustice of the Parisians, never exhibited any dislike of the city. In his *Memoirs of Exile* he explains the hatred of Paris felt by the departments in coldly reasonable terms of common sense:

"For a long time," he says, "the departments had reason to complain, and did complain, of the supremacy of Paris. Paris was the object of every favour. It was in Paris that the equipments of our armies were made, exclusively and at great expense, in order to give work to the unemployed and to create dependants. It was to the Parisian soldiery that the gold of the Republic was given; enormous sums were paid for their enrolment, while the love of liberty alone was responsible for the enrolment of the citizen-soldiers of the departments. It was for Paris that a militia of *sans-culottes* was suggested, paid with the nation's coin. Paris obtained millions to pay her debts, to buy provisions. The departments saw this favouritism with envious eyes."

It was during the second Roland Ministry that Mme. Roland changed her sentiments with regard to Paris, because Roland was then unpopular. He fell in thwarting Danton, who intended that Paris, no matter what the fate of the armies, should remain the centre of national defence. Roland spoke of leaving Paris, of transporting the government to the Loire or the Midi. This became known, and it was from that time that Parisian opinion (excited also by Marat and Robespierre) turned against Roland. The latter was the object, at the time of the September massacres, on September 2, 1792, of a mandate of arrest issued by the Committee of Surveillance of the Commune. That Roland was not arrested then was due to the intervention of Danton. To be treated thus by the Parisians! To be saved thus by Danton! At once Mme. Roland was irreconcilably at loggerheads with Paris and with Danton. She inspired in her friends her own anger, her own fear, her own hatred; and these feelings were by no means factitious. In his memoirs, in which he relieves his soul, Buzot writes:

"They dared to make a crime out of Roland's proposal, at the time when Brunswick, at the head of the Prussians, was advancing on Paris, to save the remains of liberty by transporting them to the South of France. Why, what was Paris in comparison with all France? Because the degraded mob of that city should re-enter into the slavery from which it was born, was that a reason why the whole French nation should be enslaved? Ah well, I may truly say that France can hope neither for liberty nor happiness save in the entire and irreparable destruction of this capital."

Compare this posthumous confession with the anathema hurled at Paris by Isnard, on May 25, 1793, from the presidential arm-chair, when he threatened the city with total destruction, and we shall see that this fear and hatred of a Parisian dictatorship was the ruling characteristic of this group, which differed from the Mountain not in principles, but in its concep-

tion of the part that the capital was to play in an invaded and disorganised France.

## III.

Among the influential members, the chiefs of the Girondist party, contemporaries placed Brissot in the front rank. At the trial of the Girondists before the Revolutionary Tribunal it was he who was honoured by the seat reserved for the leader of each conspiracy judged by the tribunal. He protested against this involuntary assumption of the chieftainship of the party, and wrote in his project of defence :

"But at least these conspirators have an able leader : an audacious man, of powerful resources, of great eloquence, of vast influence over the multitude : a Catiline, in short ? No ! Men attribute to them a chief whom they do not even know ; who shuns them as does the Grand Lama his subjects ; a timid man, unsociable, and poor ; shut up in his office, or with his family ; not showing himself in the tribunes ; a leader, in a word, who conspires all alone, to use the phrase of Saint-Just ; and that leader is myself. I a party leader ! It was six months ago that this part was attributed to me, and I am still uncertain whether the author of this ridiculous burlesque intended a pleasantry or an atrocity."

Meillan, in his memoirs, says that no one was less fit than Brissot "to form a party," and that he had even "a facility of temperament which made him a follower of the others rather than their chief."

It is nevertheless the fact that his influence was very great ; especially under the Legislative Assembly. It was he who formed the first Girondist Ministry ; it was he who, on March 21, 1792, in the name of the Committee of the Place Vendôme, went to offer Roland the portfolio of the Minister of the Interior ; it was he who selected Clavière for financial affairs. The Ministry being formed, he wrote Roland such notes as the following :

"My dear Roland, I send you a list of those you ought to place. You and Lanthenas ought to have it always under your eyes, in order not to nominate any one whomsoever excepting the persons who are recommended in this list."

Was not this the language of a leader? And under the Convention, if it was not he who directed the party in everything, did he not still play a very important part in it? The most important political event previous to May 31st, of which the consequences had the greatest influence on the destinies of the Democratic Republic, was the decree by which war was declared against England and Holland (February 1, 1793); and it was upon Brissot's report, in the name of the Committee of General Defence, that this decree was passed. On May 22nd, moreover, in a brochure entitled *Brissot to his Constituents*, he proposed as the only means of saving the country: (1) the destruction of the municipality of Paris; (2) the closing of the Jacobin Club. This brochure had a decisive influence, and destroyed all projects of conciliation; one may say that the Jacobins, thus threatened by Brissot, struck at the Girondists in order not to be struck by them.

The insults and slanders that his influence earned him had no foundation; Brissot's probity was unquestionable. However, the Montagnards have presented him as the type of political intriguer. Buzot says, on the contrary:

"He was so far from being constituted for intrigue that the slightest idea of artifice, of dissimulation, was in his eyes a crime. We sometimes used to make game of his simplicity, his good-nature, and we used to say, laughing: '*Of all possible Brissotins*, he is the least Brissotish.'"

Meillan and Bailleul confirm this. It is confirmed by Montagnards also. In his pamphlet, *Neither Marat nor Roland*, Anacharsis Clootz writes of him: "As for Brissot, I do not know a man who is less of a

Brissotin than he." Camille Desmoulins informs us that when Danton wished to plague Brissot, he used to say to him, pleasantly: "Brissot, you are a Brissotin." It is none the less true that, republican and notorious republican though he was, he believed the constitutional monarchy should be maintained, and, in July, 1792, that the republicans should be threatened "by the sword of the law." It is not surprising that such a policy appeared anything but ingenuous, and that Brissot's enemies were able to diminish his popularity by this accusation of Machiavelism; all the more so as he owned himself that his theoretical and practical politics were not always in mutual agreement.

However, the basis of Brissot's politics was the most generous philanthropy. Founder of the *Society of the Friends of the Black Races*[1] (1788), the friend and admirer of the Quakers, whose humanitarian tendencies he propagated, while he even adopted and made fashionable their mode of wearing the hair unpowdered, it was he above all who enlarged the scope of patriotism. He believed and declared that the French Revolution ought to profit all oppressed nations, indeed all humanity, black as well as white; for there was, he used to say, no *nobility of skin*. By his prophecies he tended to push back, to break up, all geographical frontiers, in order to open up the whole world to the "new thought." This tendency inspired his entire policy of war, and all the speeches in which he preached war as the indispensable vehicle of revolutionary ideas. If the Gironde took the initiative in arming the Revolution and urging it past the frontiers, making it a "war of propaganda," it was Brissot in particular who had the honour and responsibility of the crusade which had as its object the propagation of the rights of man in Europe and through the world.

[1] *Société des amis des noirs.*

He was a learned man, perfectly prepared for political life by his studies and his travels. He had lived in England, in Holland, in the United States, informing himself at the best sources, and according to the best authorities, immediately popularising all that he learned; an indefatigable polygraphist and extremely well read. Before 1789 he had edited the *Courrier de l'Europe*, which served as a model for the periodical press of the Revolution. From July, 1789, until the fall of his party in June, 1793, he published an important journal, the *Patriote français*, which he made the organ of the Girondists. He had no particular talent as a writer nor as an orator; but he knew how to win people over by his lucidity, tenacity, and knowledge. With the exception of Mirabeau, the Revolution knew no one with a mind so stored with facts; knowing France and the world equally; there were few as modern and as practical; and if his "opportunism" seemed Machiavelic, no one had a larger political ideal; and no one more than he felt at one with all humanity.

In the eyes of posterity, however, it is not Brissot who is the important member of the Gironde, but Vergniaud. However, this notable orator charmed his hearers rather than led them. A man of speech rather than of action, he was careless and listless.

"He was a Demosthenes," said one of his colleagues, "whom one might reproach as the Greek orator reproached the Athenians, for his thoughtlessness, idleness, and love of pleasure. He slumbered in the intervals of his speeches while the enemy was gaining territory, surrounding the Republic, and thrusting it and its defenders into the abyss. I do not know of a man less fitted to play a great part in the theatre of the Revolution. When danger was imminent he was more inclined to wait for death than to carry death into the ranks of the enemy."

Paganel adds this striking comparison:

"Imagine a man whom a number of others surround and carry off, who does not search for a loophole of escape, but who, were the

circle to break up and leave him free, would remain where he was. Such was Vergniaud among the Girondists."

His counsel was never either definite or imperious. He would say, for example, in the tribune: "I am going to venture to put some ideas before you . . ." (July 3, 1792). Men cannot be led with timid phrases of this sort. A critical spirit, he loved to protest against "this political theology, which sets up its decisions upon all sorts of questions as so many dogmas, which threatens the incredulous with its *auto-da-fés*, and which, by its persecutions, freezes the revolutionary ardour of those souls whom Nature has not gifted with exceptional energy" (May 8, 1793).

The source of his politics, the inspiration of his eloquence, must not be sought in the teachings of religion. A true son of the eighteenth century, he believed that a disdainful smile could suppress the religious question; the social side of it he would not see, but passed on with contempt. His ideal was a State in which the most learned and the best endowed would govern the ignorant masses; in which the sciences and arts, and all the flowers of the human mind, would develop in the freest conditions; in which men would perhaps think less of making humanity more virtuous than of making it more beautiful and happier. A republican rather than a democrat, he loved the people as an applauding gallery; but he never perhaps took the peasantry and the working classes seriously as citizens.

His patriotism suddenly took on a warlike exuberance; and he helped Brissot to determine the *war of propaganda*, less on account of the political reasons of Brissot than out of admiration of the beauty of a war carried on by a single people against the kings of the earth. He was, as it were, the bard of the heroic exaltation of 1792. He gave the men of that period

a good conceit of themselves; he embellished their acts and passions in their own eyes; he made them see the harmony and beauty of the apparent disorder in which France was plunged; such was his influence as an orator.

His political influence was feeble. He stood on one side, with Ducos and Boyer-Fonfrède, as a demi-Montagnard. He did not refuse conciliation with the Mountain; but he did not work for it. As a point of honour he ended by accepting the hatreds and defending the faults of the Rolandists. But he sought to redeem them, even under the enemy's fire; and his clairvoyance having been awakened by the dangers of May 31st, he attempted to turn the popular movement to the profit of his friends and his country.

Vergniaud conceived parliamentary life as an elegant and grandiose tournament; as an armed and peaceful joust. For his colleague Guadet it was a death-struggle with a chosen and hated enemy. A dry and sarcastic spirit, he was more taken up with overcoming men than with glorifying ideas. We have seen how he scoffed, at the Jacobins, at the mystical effusions of Robespierre. The Montagnards hated and feared him.

A republican by instinct, Guadet tried, as did his friends, to make the constitutional fiction last as long as possible. As August 10th drew near he had fears of the popular victory, and did not, like Vergniaud and Gensonné, confine himself to signing the letter to Boze. He saw the King, the Queen, and the young prince. He left the Tuileries with his convictions unchanged, but deeply touched. He no longer esteemed the King, and he was not converted to the monarchical faith; but, when the King came to trial, although he voted for death, he also voted for delay. His hostility against the Mountain became still more bitter, and he was the eager tool of Mme. Roland's hatreds. We are assured that it was he who prevented the reconcilia-

tion between Danton and the Gironde in March, 1791. Bailleul relates that Danton said to him: "Guadet, you are unable to sacrifice your opinions to your country; you do not know how to forgive; you will be the victim of your own obstinacy." In May, 1793, he exasperated the Montagnards by his aggressively ironical speeches, which were models of eloquence, and examples of tactlessness and political incapacity. Each revengeful stroke of this militant mind brought the fall of the Girondist party nearer by a few days, by reason of its rapidly increasing unpopularity.

Guadet and Vergniaud were two advocates of the Bordeaux bar. Another advocate of the same bar, Gensonné, was distinguished by his gravity. At first he was a moderate and conciliatory; afterwards he displayed against the Mountain an energy as bitter as that of Guadet. In his speech of January 2, 1793, in which he upheld the suggestion of causing the condemnation of Louis XVI to be ratified by the people, he spoke in these terms of Marat, Robespierre, and Clootz:

"It is only too true; the love of liberty has also its hypocrisy and its cult, its bigots and its cant. There are charlatans in political economy, as in the art of healing; they are to be known by their hatred of philosophy and enlightenment, by their skill in arousing the passions and the prejudices of the people whom they wish to deceive; they are full of impudent boasting; they are incessantly speaking of their zeal, their disinterestedness, and their rare qualities; they are impudent liars; they advertise themselves by seductive titles, by extraordinary phrases. One proclaims himself the *friend of the people;* another, *the incorruptible defender of its rights;* another still has discovered the *balm of the universal Republic.* Yet although they enjoy a certain success, reflection quickly destroys their prestige; but before attaining their end they show themselves for what they are, and the populace, ashamed at having been their dupe, drives the mountebanks away; or, if it leave them still on the boards, it listens only to laugh at their follies, and replies to their advances with distrust and contempt."

He divides the Jacobins into two parts: the blind

and the consequential. Let the former return to the Girondists and to the veritable people. As for the others, "if they have helped to save the commonwealth, they did so instinctively, like the geese of the Capitol. (*Laughter, almost universal.*) And it is certain that the Roman people, out of gratitude to this species of liberators, never created them dictators or consuls, never made them the supreme arbiter of its destinies." These heavy pleasantries of the solemn Gensonné had their effect on events, in so far as they rendered irreconcilable the wounded self-love of Robespierre and the Jacobins. The latter considered it a crime that Gensonné had been the friend and correspondent of Dumouriez. The people of Paris hated Gensonné as much as they hated Guadet.

As for Mme. Roland, I have already defined her place in the Girondist party, which was often called the *Rolandist* or *Brissotin* party. This admirable woman had truly, to speak the language of her time, a republican soul. Though she may not perhaps have realised it, the republic which she dreamed of as a liberal, humane, and beautiful thing, was above all a republic governed by her genius, in which her husband and her close friend should be the principal ministers. At heart she believed that nothing good could come save from her; and she desired to rule. She considered only those men virtuous or capable who pleased her personally; and, whatever the elevation of her mind, she judged men by their faces. This she owns unconsciously in her memoirs. For example, in July, 1791, when Vachard, the President of the Society of Indigents, was introduced to her, she found him too ugly to be honest: "I groaned to myself," she says, "over the value to be attributed to the patriotism of one who had all the appearance of what one calls a 'bad egg,'[1] and whom I should have taken for a thorough

[1] "*Qui avait toute l'encolure de ce qu'on appelle une mauvaise tête.*"

scroundrel." That she judged Vachard in this way mattered little. But it was otherwise with her judgment of Danton : " I looked at that repulsive, atrocious face, and although I told myself that one must never judge any one hastily, that I knew nothing certainly against him, and that the best man must have two reputations in times of party strife, I could not connect the idea of a good man with that face." After speaking of her own imagination, " lively enough," as she says, she adds :

"This imagination has often shown me Danton with a dagger in his hand, exciting, with voice and gesture, a horde of assassins more timid or less ferocious than he ; or else, content with his crimes, indicating his wishes with the gesture of a Sardanapalus. Assuredly I challenge any experienced painter to fail to detect in Danton all the characteristics proper to such a composition."

Thus self-warned against Danton, she none the less tried to dominate him ; [1] but he avoided her, went no more to her dinners, and thus drew upon himself a hatred which, while preventing all conciliation between the two parties, made the Revolution more violent.

The men upon whom she exercised the greatest influence, besides her husband, were Buzot, Barbaroux, and Louvet.

We have already seen what the relations were between Buzot and Mme. Roland. This Buzot, who in the Constituent Assembly had shared the popularity of Robespierre and Petion, but was a little obscured by their shadow, was a fastidious, thoughtful, passionate man ; a dreamer, whom Mme. Roland dominated, by the sheer ascendancy of her energetic temperament, and her somewhat uncertain and vacillating will. She inflamed the

[1] She could not forgive those whom she failed to dominate. Thus Condorcet, who, though a friend of the Girondists, worked for a time with Danton, was for her a timid man ; one of no enterprise. And Vergniaud, whom she only half dominated, she found a disdainful egoist ; she admits that she did not like him.

contemplative, urged him to extremes, turned his subtle mind to violence, and inspired him with a policy and an eloquence composed of anger, hatred, contempt, and heroism. Actuated by hatred of the enemies of his friend, we have seen that he, who under the Constituent Assembly had been a unitarian democrat and the friend of Paris, finally arrived at preaching Federalism in private, and heartily abused the city. In the Convention he was Mme. Roland's mouthpiece ; on September 29, 1792, it was he who supported, with a passionate insistence, the motion in favour of inviting Roland to remain in the Ministry.

Barbaroux, the Marseillais, very young, extremely handsome, and somewhat empty of ideas, was, with Louvet, the confidant of Mme. Roland's and Buzot's secret. One of the daily frequenters of the Roland *salon*, advising and advised, equally responsible with Buzot for the Rolandist policy, he attacked Robespierre furiously from the tribune, as circumstances or his whims dictated, without system or method. As for Louvet, the spiritual author of *Faublas*, he also made a target of Robespierre ; he, too, hopelessly envenomed the quarrel ; but less by means of insults than romances. He did not even see, when he attributed to the Montagnards all manner of complicated royalist schemes, that he was the dupe of his own imagination, but sincerely took his fables for the reality. This too ingenious imagination Louvet used in Mme. Roland's service ; but she was unable to control its activities.

Other Girondists held aloof ; among them the eloquent, thunder-voiced Isnard, who as President of the Convention hurled his famous anathema against Paris ; [1] Lanjuinais, perhaps the only one of the Girondists who was, with the Abbé Fauchet, a communicating Catholic, and whose Breton tenacity bordered upon heroism on June 2nd ; Lasource, who formulated the political pro-

[1] See p. 106.

gramme of his party: *to reduce Paris to her eighty-third share of influence;* Rabaut Saint-Étienne, a bold spirit, half a socialist, ill at ease under these troubled conditions, able on occasion to raise himself above the personal enmities of the Girondists; Kersaint, Manuel, Dufriche-Valazé, and Salle, who were, each in his turn, the incidental interpreters of the Girondist policies.

At first, at the beginning of the Convention, Petion affected to stand neutrally between the two parties. He claimed the *rôle* of arbiter; later, on April 12, 1793, he turned suddenly and unexpectedly upon his old friend Robespierre, and during his proscription and the civil war he was the bitterest and blindest of the Girondist party; publicly praising the act of Charlotte Corday, and regarding the civil war with eager approval.

Of all the Girondists the greatest in the eyes of posterity is Condorcet. But it was only well on in the history of the Girondists that he became associated with them. Up to a date which it is rather difficult to determine precisely, he supported the policy of Danton. He was even unwilling that Robespierre should be attacked too vigorously, and in the *Chronique de Paris* of October 31, 1793, he blamed the philippics of Louvet. He tried to prevent a division in the republican ranks on account of the part which Paris was to play in the national life, and on November 1, 1793, he wrote, in the same paper:

"Are you going to have a Parisian party and a departmental party? No, because Paris knows that she can live only by the departments; and the departments know that without one chief refuge of liberty a scattered nation would inevitably become enslaved."

After January 6, 1793, he ceased to write for the *Chronique*, and his whole time seems to have been taken up by his functions as reporter to the Committee of Constitution. He was not a hero of the tribunes; his rare speeches in the Convention had for their object

the defence of the projected Constitution of which he was the reporter. It is consequently very difficult to discover at what precise moment he forsook the Mountain for the Gironde. It is probable that it was on the occasion of the intentional delays which the Montagnards put in the way of the vote on the projected Constitution. But there is no doubt that he ended by absorbing the hatreds and the prejudices of the Rolandists ; his declarations after the Montagnard Constitution was voted prove as much. He then published a criticism, sufficiently bitter and virulent, of the project which had been substituted for his,[1] and appropriating the slanderous fictions of Louvet, he plainly accused his adversaries of being royalists, in a peroration which we must reproduce, as it explains Condorcet's arrest, and especially because it shows to what degree of blindness and injustice the wisest of the Girondists had attained.

"Citizens," said Condorcet, "a refusal to accept a Constitution would expose the country to great misfortunes ; but you have to choose between two proposals ;[2] you must judge the circumstances in which they were drawn up, examine which of the two gives you a more certain guarantee of your rights, and exposes you the less to the influence of associations and parties. See above all which offers you the more certain and more peaceable means of obtaining a salutary reform, and then choose between the work of a free Committee and that which tyranny has forced upon the Convention.

"Above all, do not forget one last consideration : consider this Council of *twenty-four*, entrusted with the choice of Ministers, as alive to the daily and habitual march of administration as a king could be ; resembling in everything the monarchy of 1791, deprived of the privi-

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[1] *Aux citoyens français sur la Constitution.*

[2] No : the citizens had not to choose between the proposal of Condorcet and that of Hérault de Séchelles. They had to ratify or reject this latter project, accepted by the Convention. Condorcet wished to bring this vote of the Convention into question ; he proposed another plebiscite, and this in a time of civil and external war. This was a serious matter indeed.

lege of inviolability and the right of refusing laws, prerogatives of which it would have been imprudent to revive even the idea. At the same time observe how this body is set in the midst of the Republic as an obstacle to all activities in public affairs, to all order in the administration, to all unity of views and principles, and then judge if those who would have sought to prepare the pedestal of a new king would not naturally have desired such an executive Council, whose government would quickly disgust the nation with the authority of *many*, when it could easily be replaced by a monarch without deranging any of the other mainsprings of the political machine.

"Note also that this legislative body is alienated from the system of departmental division, when all the rest of the Convention is strongly attached to it; see with what facility these men, elected by their several departments, destined to be the elements of the Executive Council, can form in a moment the first congress of a confederated Republic, and, if you wish France to be republican, if you wish that she should form only a single people, you will not adopt such a bizarre combination, which, according to the hazard of circumstances, may conduct you equally to the two perils you ought to avoid: the division into confederated States, and the monarchy.

"Frenchmen, he who addresses these remarks to you owes you the truth, and he has told it. He does not name himself, because the press, like speech, has ceased to be free, and it is in your interest to conceal from your enemies the names of your defenders."

Condorcet also signed the protest of the deputies of Aisne against the doings of May 31 and June 2, 1793.[1] When the decree of arrest was passed on July 8, 1793, he avoided arrest, and wrote the Convention an angry letter, which was not read. "When the National Convention is not free," he says, "citizens are no longer bound by its laws." He refuses to justify himself: "I do not need to do so either to France or to Europe." In his eyes the Montagnards are royalist conspirators.

[1] The deputies of Aisne said therein to their constituents: "Your enlightenment and patriotism will suggest measures, wise, but firm and effectual, which you must take to assure the entire liberty of the national representation, to repair the outrage done to the majesty of the French people, and to re-establish the liberty of the press and the inviolability of the public faith," &c. (*Histoire de la Terreur*, Mortimer-Ternaux).

"I will ask," he says, "why such care is taken to put away those whose enlightenment and imperturbable republicanism would oppose the firmest resistance to the re-establishment of royalty? Are they not to be thrown into prison? Are not their enemies preparing with all the arts of tyranny to condemn us to the anguish of hearing a king proclaimed?"

## IV.

Such were the organisation, the programme, and the personalities of the Girondist party; a party more or less indefinite about the edges, but which presently grew more definite and more compact; until at the end of its normal career, in May, 1793, it was almost unified. In any case, it was certainly a party.

Can we say as much of the Mountain? At the end of November or the beginning of December, 1792, in one of his *Lettres à ses commettants*,[1] Robespierre defined the Mountain in these terms:

"Since the early days of the Revolution a party of the Assembly has been so called to which a small number of deputies have attached themselves who are defending the cause of the people to the utmost, with the greatest constancy and fidelity."

The Montagnard party would thus at the outset have been the group of democrats in the Constituent Assembly; but the title Montagnard was unknown under that Assembly. It is often met with during the Legislative Assembly. At the beginning of the Convention we see that it is not yet very popular, since Robespierre thinks it necessary to explain its meaning to his constituents. He adds:

"In the present Assembly . . . there are, in the Plain and the aquatic regions, very worthy men and Montagnards; and on the Mountain one sometimes hears the buzzing of Feuillantist insects and little Girondist flies which have escaped from the Marsh."

There were thus Montagnards almost everywhere in

[1] Undated, ii. 23.

the Convention, and they did not form a compact group.

These words: the *Mountain, Montagnards*, were only popular in June, 1793, at the height of the struggle against Federalism. But we may say that there truly was a Mountain in the Convention once the coalition had been formed against the Girondists, and in favour of Paris and a Parisian dictatorship. In opposition to the Right, which wished to employ in time of war, when the whole nation was a camp, a policy of peace, a liberal, decentralising, departmental, anti-Parisian policy, the Left upheld a revolutionary and dictatorial policy, which set Paris provisionally at the head of France, and made the Jacobin clubs an irresistible focus of patriotic energy, and put violent means in operation against the enemies without and within.

This coalition was not formed of fixed elements, and had no avowed programme; at least, during the period we are considering; that is to say, until the fall of the Gironde. But it had a framework, a scaffolding: the Jacobin clubs. Brissot was expelled from the Jacobins on October 10, 1792; the other Girondists were quickly expelled or resigned. The club was then composed only of the democratic partisans of Paris. The words *Jacobin* and *Montagnard* became for a time synonymous.

We may say that all those were Montagnards who saw in the provisional preponderance of Paris the sign and element of the national unity; that is to say, all those who did not lend themselves to the Girondist attempt to reduce the influence of Paris to an eighty-third.[1] From that time forward, how are we to determine the statistics of a party which forms and dissolves itself according to circumstances? Its personal com-

[1] The anti-Federalist and unitarian ideas of the Montagnards are strikingly formulated in the circular of the Jacobin Club of January 7, 1793.

position varies accordingly as it is a matter of the trial of Louis XVI or that of Marat. No settled understanding, no organisation into leaders and followers ; or rather there were no leaders and no followers, but only patriots without preconceived ideas, who tried to ensure the success of the national defence by empirical means, and to reduce to impotence whosoever should compromise that defence by inopportune differences of opinion, and who acted either as isolated individuals or very small groups of friends.

It was the Girondists who attributed to the Montagnards a party organisation, leaders, and a programme. Nevertheless, there was no understanding between Robespierre, for instance, and Cambon ; between Danton and Anacharsis Clootz. As for the Montagnard programme : what had the Girondists to say of that? They accused the Montagnards of being anarchists ; thought them a force of disorganisation, tending to a general levelling. This accusation was baseless ; none of the notable individuals of the Montagnard party had so far formulated the simplest plan of radical reform. Robespierre, at the end of 1792, declared that he would be content with the Constitution of 1791 "deroyalised." The Montagnards attacked the "agrarian law" even more fervently than the Girondists. It was Danton who, on September 1, 1792, obtained the decree maintaining property. It was Barère who, on March 18, 1793, was responsible for the decree of the death penalty against supporters of the agrarian law.

The Girondists pretended that the re-establishment of royalty was part of the Montagnard programme. It was not only the romancer, Louvet, but also the wise Condorcet, as we have seen, who treated the Montagnards as royalists. It is certain that Robespierre and Danton were not republicans of the day before ; it is also certain that Philippe-Égalité was

sitting on the benches of the Mountain, and that when the Girondists demanded his banishment the Montagnards opposed it. On the other hand, when Buzot proposed (December 4, 1792) to decree the death penalty against whosoever should propose the re-establishment of the monarchy, this proposition was opposed by a party of Montagnards, among others by Basire, who declared "that it would amount to an attempt upon the liberty of the people's sanction respecting the Constitution." He even went so far as to say, if we are to believe the *Moniteur:* "Would not people say that *your* Republic was established only by force of a faction?" But there is no evidence in existence that the Montagnards ever dreamed at this time of re-establishing the throne. They defended Philippe-Égalité, who sat with them, on a point of honour. The attacks of the Girondists resulted in their engaging in a furious anti-Royalist policy; they guillotined Louis XVI, and, on June 2nd, proscribed Philippe-Égalité and the Girondists. The situation was now reversed to the detriment of the Girondists, and it was the Montagnards who were henceforth, in the eyes of the people, the real champions of the Republic.

Is it true that there was a solidarity of crime among the Montagnards? Is it true that they were the authors or accomplices of the massacres of September? Yes, said the Girondists; and they harassed their opponents by incessantly evoking the memory of September. Marat alone had his share of responsibility for the massacres. Robespierre was innocent of them. Danton, then Minister of Justice, had done all that was humanly possible to prevent their extension. But Robespierre and Danton, at the height of their quarrel with the Girondists, had Marat as their ally; this was a necessity of their Parisian policy. Very soon a singular state of things came to pass; exasperated by hearing themselves reproached for the September

massacres by men who had plainly excused them,[1] a number of them at last, either by policy or in anger, began to extol the massacres they had hitherto condemned.

It was on November 5, 1792, at the Jacobin Club, that this sudden change took place. Manuel having stated that in September the people, malicious as any king, had determined to have their Saint Bartholomew's day, Collot d'Herbois protested, and declared, while deploring particular atrocities, while "yielding to humanity the regrets which humanity exacts," that it must be recognised "that, without the 2nd of September, there would have been no liberty, no National Convention." He even declared that this was "the principal article of the *credo* of our liberty." Barère, then hesitating between the two parties, and accused by Merlin (of Thionville) of having censured the massacres, said:

"That day, of which we must say nothing more, since we cannot bring the Revolution to trial, appears a crime in the eyes of the average common man, because there was a violation of the laws; but in the eyes of a statesman it had two great results. Firstly, it resulted in the disappearance of those conspirators whom the sword of the law seemed powerless to reach; secondly, it annihilated all the disastrous projects born of the hydra of Feuillantism, royalism, and aristocracy, which was raising its hideous head above the ramparts of Verdun and Longwy."

Fabre d'Églantine declared that "it was the men of August 10th who broke into the prisons of the Abbaye, and those of Orléans and Versailles." Upon his motion the Jacobins resolved "that a historical memoir of all the events of the Revolution up to that day should be drawn up," and for that purpose Fabre d'Églantine, Panis, Tallien, Danton, Chabot, Basire, and Collot d'Herbois were nominated.

[1] See p. 51.

This "historical memoir" was never written, but on November 30, 1792, the Society adopted a circular addressed to the affiliated societies, which was drawn up by Robert [1] and Chabot, and in which it replied to various accusations brought against the Mountain by the Gironde; among others, the accusation of wishing to form a triumvirate, and a dictatorship; and in this it spoke eulogistically of September 2nd, "a day so misrepresented, so calumniated in the departments, yet a day so essentially bound up with August 10th as to contribute no less than the latter to save the Republic." Then what, according to the Jacobins, did occur that day? Two things: firstly, the enrolment of volunteers; secondly the massacres. The voluntary enrolments were praiseworthy; the massacres, excusable. The two events, in fact, were inseparable. In short, the circular was a dubious and sufficiently disingenuous apology. But thenceforth the Jacobins declared that to attack the days of the September massacres would be to attack the Revolution.

When the Girondists voted that proceedings should be taken against the authors of the massacres (January 20, 1793), the Jacobins emphasised their justification of the massacres. On February 10th, Billaud-Varenne mounted the tribune to say that this "terrible vengeance" had contributed to the safety of the country, in "delaying the King of Prussia for six days," and the club decided to send this speech to the affiliated societies. The Jacobin Society of Lisieux having been responsible for some manifestation (of which we know nothing) in favour of the Girondists, the Committee of Correspondence of the Jacobin Club of Paris sent it, on February 14th, a letter in which the massacres were approved of unreservedly and without circumlocution. We read therein, with regard to the proposal

[1] Robert personally extolled the doings of the *Septemberers* in a brochure.

for a departmental guard to protect the Convention against Paris :

" The cunning pretext for this insidious demand was founded on the insurrection of the 2nd and 3rd of September ; an insurrection which they have treacherously calumniated, not being able to calumniate the insurrection of the 10th of August ; an insurrection which, and it is time it was said, was the means of saving liberty and the country. They have calumniated it while evading or controverting the facts which produced it. They are eager, some time after the event, to publish it as a massacre excited by personal revenge, and executed by a few men ; they have not realised, the scoundrels, that if the massacre was not general they and the public functionaries were culpable in not having prevented it ; they take good care not to make it known that the Federals of the eighty-three departments also took part in it, and that the Parisians, forced to leave their homes to fight against an enemy whom they were not certain of keeping out of Paris, where they were leaving their women and children at the mercy of the conspirators' daggers, saw themselves between two great dangers ; that the plot for arming the prisoners detained since the 10th of August was discovered ; that the tribunals, paralysed, were no longer judging these conspirators ; were acquitting them or allowing them to escape ; as is witnessed by Montmorin, Narbonne, and the sometime Prince de Poix, all instruments of the aristocracy, who were saved from the justice of the sovereign people, having escaped its vengeance by their express promise that the heads of the guilty should fall beneath the axe of the law. The weaker patriots were deceived as to these facts ; the moderates, the aristocrats, and the Feuillants, cried out loudly at the massacre, which gave a check to their beloved Brunswick and the King of Prussia (trembling lest the prisoners of the Temple should have their throats cut also if they took another step) ; they obscured the utter terror which seized them with the indignation of their pretended sensibility, and ranged themselves on the side of those who, to get you also on their side, voted with the patriots for the Republic and the abolition of royalty." [1]

In this manner the Jacobins and Montagnards (for by this time the words were synonymous), nearly all of whom were innocent of the September massacres,

[1] This letter, which probably has not been printed, was kindly sent me by M. Bégis, who has the original. It is signed by Desfieux, La Faye, Gaillard, Debuscher, Pollet, Prieur (of Marne), Duevis, Auvrest, Spol, Deguaigné, Sambat, and Guidan.

came to burden themselves with the responsibility of causing them. Certainly neither Robespierre nor Danton accepted this responsibility. But in vain did Robespierre show by his silence that he did not approve of the retrospective attitude of the Jacobins in respect of the massacres; in vain did Danton, at the tribune of the Convention (March 10, 1793,) regret "those bloody days which every good citizen must lament"; the Montagnard party confronted posterity with its hands fouled by the blood of September, as the Girondins desired that it should; and the republican ideal was thereby long discredited.

Had the Montagnards a common religious policy? No; Robespierre had not yet imposed on his friends the cult of the Supreme Being. The Montagnards were Deists, as were the Girondins; the one party after the fashion of Voltaire, the other after the manner of Rousseau. Perhaps they reprobated atheism more than did those Girondists who applauded the atheist Jacob Dupont.[1] It was, however, a matter of political tactics with both. No essential religious difference can be perceived between the Mountain and the Gironde.

The true difference between the two parties, that which made them two—we cannot too often repeat it, for the truth has been long obscured—is that the Montagnards were anxious that Paris, during this crisis of national defence, should be the directing capital, while the Girondists were opposed to this preponderance of Paris.

But if the Montagnards were in favour of the dictatorship of Paris, is it true that they then desired to transform that dictatorship, little by little, into the dictatorship of one man? It was Marat who demanded this dictatorship of a single man, and he was alone, or almost alone, in demanding it. Did the Montagnards wish to establish a triumvirate? The supposed

[1] See p. 44.

triumvirs, Robespierre, Danton, and Marat, were not in agreement. However, these Girondist fables did not go uncredited, for these three men did really possess influence. They appeared to direct the Mountain to a single end, because events resulted in the triumph of the Mountain over the Gironde ; but we shall see that they were not really agreed either as to the end or the method, although they did at that time appear to be in agreement.

## V.

These three men, Marat, Robespierre, Danton, well represent the different tendencies which at that time existed (from September, 1792, to June, 1793) in the apparently united Montagnard party.

We have seen that Marat, before August 10th, was hesitating between the monarchy and the Republic, and rather in favour of the monarchy. He had a contempt for what he called metaphysical dreams. Whether journalist or deputy, he had only one definite idea, and that was a fixed idea : that the people, the people whom he loved and served, should be at the same time free and led ; it must have a guide, a chief, a dictator, acclaimed by the people and all-powerful, so that he should be supported by general consent. A good and rapid judge, this dictator would defend the people against its enemies, while every one would devote himself to his own affairs. The tribune, the committees, the debates in the Convention, make Marat laugh with pity and contempt ; let them elect a man, and let him govern ! Is Marat then a royalist? No ; he has accepted the Republic ; he upholds it ; he will have no more of hereditary power ; but the power shall be delegated for a time ; there should

be a plebiscitary dictatorship. There is Marat's policy ; he has to uphold it in the Mountain single-handed, and it is this policy, at present disowned by all the leaders, which will finally triumph after the 18th of *Brumaire*.

The people, according to Marat, ought to have killed their enemies from the beginning. Under the Constituent Assembly a few heads would have been sufficient. But no one listened to him. Now a hundred thousand, two hundred thousand heads will scarcely be enough : not for vengeance, but to safeguard the nation. He is not the first to give such advice ; the counter-revolutionary journalists were the first to demand the killing of the "patriots." But he is the only one, in the revolutionary party, to demand this wholesale effusion of blood ; above all, to believe it useful.

As deputy for Paris in the Convention he was extremely popular. Robespierre and Danton disowned him when he demanded heads wholesale or urged a dictatorship. He boasted of walking alone, saying that "geese go about in a flock." The Parisians were far from following his essential advice ; they had no appetite for a dictator at that time ; I do not think the idea of a dictatorship was ever given favourable expression in any popular manifestation of the period. However, they did listen to Marat once ; when he counselled them to constitute themselves a court-martial for the purpose of judging their enemies ; and the September massacres might never have taken place if he had not advised them. Now, under the Convention, he saw that the people had fresh enemies, and advised a new massacre.[1] The people did not

[1] We must read Marat's own words; for example, when he was denounced in the Convention on September 25, 1792, for having demanded a dictator and advised the massacres, and he replied from the tribune (*Moniteur*, xiv. 49) : "I have trembled myself at the impetuous and disorderly movements of the people ; and in order that

listen to him. During the period of military successes, from September, 1792, to March, 1793, his influence was small, and his anger against the Girondists seemed unjust and premature. The riot of February 25, 1793, in which some grocers' shops were pillaged by working men who were afraid of a famine, seems to have been provoked by his journal; but it was abortive. However, the military reverses began at the end of March, and Marat immediately regained his great influence. Was he not right beforehand? Was he not a prophet?[1] Behold him, preaching to the people

these risings should not be eternally futile, and that there should be no need that they should begin over again, I have asked that they should name a good citizen, wise, just, and firm, known for his ardent love of liberty, to direct their movements, and to make them contribute to the public welfare. If the people could only have seen the wisdom of this measure, and if they had adopted it in all its fulness the very day when the Bastille was conquered, they would have struck off, at my word, the heads of 500 conspirators. All would have been tranquil to-day. The traitors would have trembled, and liberty and justice would be established this day within our walls. I have therefore several times proposed to give immediate authority to a wise and powerful man, to be known as the tribune of the people, the dictator, &c., the title matters nothing. As a proof that I wished to tie him to the country, remember that I demanded that a chain and shot should be fastened to his legs, and that his authority should be limited to striking off the heads of criminals. Such was my opinion. I have not spoken of it in the clubs; I have mentioned it in my writings; I set my name to them, and I do not blush for them. If you are not yet on a level at which you can understand me, so much the worse for you!" (The *Journal des débats* notes here "an outburst of laughter from the Assembly and the applause of a few citizens.") "Our troubles are not over. Already 100,000 patriots have been butchered because I was not listened to soon enough; 100,000 more will be slaughtered or are threatened with such a fate; and if the people show any weakness, anarchy will have no end." Gorsas says, in his *Courrier:* "A stupefied silence reigned; never had such maxims been heard from the tribune."

[1] The success of Marat's prophecies was one of the reasons of his popularity. There were others; he was felt to be sincere, and he was. He slandered his adversaries, but without knowing it; out of credulity

the Parisian and Montagnard policy as against the departmental and Girondist policy. Dumouriez goes over to the enemy: he persuades the people that the Girondists are accomplices in his treason. He provokes the "patriotic" campaign of the sections against the Girondists.

His prodigious and instantaneous increase of power is attested by his election to the presidency of the Jacobin Club, on April 5, 1793. The Jacobins, on the same day, proclaim the necessity of proscribing the Girondists, in a circular signed by Marat as president, in which we read:

"Such delegates [the Girondist members of the Convention] are traitors, royalists, and inept. The Republic condemns the friends of kings. These are they who are parcelling it out, ruining it, and have sworn to destroy it. Yes, citizens, it is they who have formed this criminal and disastrous faction. With them there will be an end of your liberty, and by their prompt expulsion the country is saved! ! !"

Dumouriez, having an understanding with the Girondists, is going to march the Austrians upon Paris. "To arms, republicans! Fly to Paris: it is the mustering-place of France. Paris must be the headquarters of the Republic."

It was as a result of this that the Girondists, on April 13, 1793, profiting by the absence of a large proportion of the Montagnards, passed a decree of accusation against Marat, by 220 votes out of 360. They thus forced a large party of the Montagnards to make common cause with an individual whom they did not like, but whose popularity throughout Paris was to be feared: so much so, that to vote against Marat was to vote against Paris, and so to abdicate, to the profit of the Girondists. When the address

and passion. If he learned that he had been mistaken he tore up his article. The people preferred his style, solemn, never trivial, to the deliberate grossness of "Father Duchesne."

of the Jacobins, signed by Marat, was read from the tribune, the Left affected to applaud it, and a large number of Montagnards were willing to sign it. The Girondist Gorsas has described the scene in his *Courrier* thus :

"David, at the head of the phalanx, rushed to the desk to sign this provocation to civil war. The handful of men dispersed upon the Mountain applauded furiously, declaring their support, and flew to affix their signatures. On the way they invited their neighbours to second them, and gathered a few proselytes. Danton and Delacroix remained motionless. Robespierre advanced to the desk with measured steps, and returned without signing."

The number of those who signed was 96 ; they belonged to all regions of the Mountain. Among them were Levasseur (of Sarthe), Panis, Baudot, Monestier (of Puy-de-Dôme), Fabre d'Eglantine, Robespierre the younger, Audouin, Granet, Vadier, David, Camille Desmoulins, Dubois-Crancé, Rühl, Bentabole, and Romme.

From that time there seems to have been a Marat party ; and the man who was hitherto isolated in the Convention, where not a single member approved of his proposals of dictatorships, and his incitements to murder, went before the Revolutionary Tribunal with the prestige of a party leader. Acquitted, and led back in triumph to the Convention, "he was carried," says Gorsas, "to the summit of the Mountain, where he received the accolade of all his followers," and thence to the tribune, where he expressed himself with modesty and simplicity. At the Jacobins he received a crown from the hands of the president ; he ascended the tribune, where a child of four years presented him with another crown. "Do not let us busy ourselves with crowns," he said ; "let us avoid enthusiasm ; let us leave these childish matters, and think only of crushing our enemies" (April 26th).

*Our enemies* were not for him, at this time, the soldiers of monarchical Europe, but the Girondists. Against them his hatred was frank, inexorable, and he did not dissemble his thirst for vengeance. "I propose," he said, on May 19th, "that the Convention shall declare [1] against the unlimited liberty of opinions, so that I may send to the scaffold the faction of *statesmen* who decreed the accusation against me." He was the leader of the insurrection which was then preparing, and which seemed to be necessitated by the bad news from the Vendée and Lyons. He did not confine himself to newspaper articles, to counsels, to words; he acted. It was he who, on June 1, 1793, mounted to the belfry of the Hôtel de Ville, where he sounded the tocsin with his own hands. But for Marat the people of Paris would probably have confined themselves to the pacific manifestations of May 31st. But for Marat, it is improbable that the people would have forced the Convention to decree the arrest of the Girondists.

This Marat, in short, with his eccentric opinions, who began by being half ridiculous, attained, by the mode of action which won him his popularity, a great influence over events, and became in reality one of the political leaders of the Mountain, which he persuaded pitilessly to strike his adversaries. Assassinated by Charlotte Corday (July 13, 1793), he had a still wider and more powerful posthumous influence; an influence which extended over the whole of France, in the sense that he represented the wounded fatherland; and the worship of Marat, which was nothing but the cult of the *Patrie*, exalted and united men's

[1] This is evidently his meaning. He says "que la Convention décrète la liberté illimitée des opinions." *Décréter* means not only to decree, but to issue a writ against; hence to prohibit. The sentence is therefore ambiguous; but his sentiments are not.—[TRANS.]

hearts against the enemy without the gates, and contributed to the success of the national defence.[1]

It was only after his death that Marat became thus popular throughout all France. During his life his popularity was confined almost wholly to Paris, and especially to the Faubourgs Saint-Antoine and Saint-Marceau.

Robespierre, on the other hand, was universally popular in his lifetime. Every one saw in him the apostle, the initiator of democracy. It was he who, in April, 1791, when he demanded universal suffrage, set politicians the example of speaking of the people in a friendly and respectful tone, with a real feeling of brotherhood and equality. The people had other advocates, it is true, but none who exhibited such a lively and imperturbable esteem for the virtues of the people. The democrat Condorcet thought the people would be good when they were educated; the

[1] In speaking of Marat's political ideas, and the part he took in the quarrel between the Gironde and the Mountain, I have been anxious to adduce only such facts as seem to me certain. A physiological study of his personality would be more conjectural. Let us say only that he was diseased; according to the recent theories of Dr. Cabanès (*Le cabinet secret de l'histoire*) he suffered from a kind of general eczema. In 1792–3 this malady had become very acute. A terrible itching forced him to pass entire days in the bath, without being able to quench the fire that devoured him. It has been said that he was infected with the delirium of persecution. I do not think we can draw this conclusion from his writings, his speeches, and our authentic knowledge of his conduct. All that we can say is that as a misunderstood inventor his self-love had been wounded. His violence often amounts to delirium; but it is the sense of injustice that makes him delirious. It is pity that makes him cruel, not fear. He had no fear of poverty; his life was sober, rigid, retiring. He did not fear death. One might rather say that he loved death; that the hope of living no longer was his strength and his consolation. In April, 1791, protesting against the affront which would be offered him if people had one day the idea of placing him in the Panthéon with the intriguing Mirabeau, he writes in his journal: "*Yes, I would a hundred times rather never die* than have to fear such a cruel outrage!"

democrat Marat thought them futile and shallow, and treated them like children ; Robespierre believed them to be responsible, reasonable, and virtuous ; he even stated that all reason and all virtue resided in the people. He proclaimed that the people were never wrong ; [1] this was the theme of his oratory, at the Jacobins and in the Convention. And he was sincere ; he really saw the people thus : living as he did in the house of working-folk of irreproachable character, educated and generous : the Duplays. This sincerity, his absolute honesty, and his austerity made him, in the eyes of the people, *the incorruptible*.

His deportment contributed to his popularity. The people liked his costume—that of a small "gentleman at large" of the old times—his powdered hair, and knew that he was glad to avoid the open breast, the red bonnet, of the extreme Jacobin. The people loved his grave and restrained eloquence, his long, cautious periods, and his imperturbably serious accent ; his horror of laughter and his academic style.

The poor adored him when they heard him say that the rich were vicious ; that with more than 3,000 livres a year it was hardly possible to be honest ; that virtue lay in mediocrity.

Virtue ! All politics, according to Robespierre, must tend to establish the reign of virtue and confound vice. He reasoned thus : those who are mistaken are vicious ; those who are virtuous are right ; error is a corruption of the heart ; error cannot be sincere ; error is always deliberate. There are only two parties : good and bad citizens. Conclusion : all those who do not think as we do must be eliminated from the city ; they are

[1] For example, he said at the Jacobins, on February 25, 1793 : "I have maintained, in spite of persecution, and unsupported, that the people are never wrong ; I dared to proclaim this truth at a time when it was not yet recognised ; the course of the Revolution has developed it."

evil-intentioned and unsociable people. Let us eliminate the Girondists to-day; to-morrow will be the turn of the Hébertists and Dantonists.

There is a political verity. Whosoever departs from it, be it ever so little, is an enemy of the people. How is this verity, this rigid line, to be distinguished? It can be seen if one is honest. Also Robespierre shows it to the people; you need only follow Robespierre; he is and must be the minister of the Truth, the dictator of Verity.

Such, at the time we are speaking of, were the policy and the popularity of Robespierre.

He assumed an appearance of immobility, and he changed. A monarchist before August 10th, he was a republican after September 22nd; and he followed the movements of the populace far more than he led them. It is for this reason that he seems to us to-day a hypocritical demagogue, and also because he points out the desirable but not the possible; he says what ought to be done, but never tells one how to do it.

He loves his country and humanity; he is ready to die for the people. But he adores and displays his *ego*. His hatreds are as eternal and inexorable as those of Mme. Roland. If this magnanimous woman prevented the Girondists from becoming reconciled with the Montagnards, we may say that this magnanimous man prevented the Montagnards from becoming reconciled with the Girondists.

The Girondists had wounded him in his religious conscience. He had not forgotten that in 1792 Guadet had ridiculed him in respect of his Providence. This ridicule was renewed. In the *Chronique de Paris* of November 9, 1792, there appeared a pen-portrait of Robespierre, attributed by some to Condorcet, by others to Rabaut Saint-Étienne:

"He has all the characteristics, not of a religious leader, but of the leader of a sect; he has obtained a reputation for austerity which aims

at sanctity; he stands on the benches and speaks of God and Providence; he calls himself the friend of the poor and weak; he obtains women and the feeble-minded as his followers; he gravely receives their adoration and their homage; in times of danger he disappears, but when the danger is past one can see nothing but Robespierre; he is a priest, and will never be anything else."

The Girondists, laughing, seemed to foresee the projected pontificate of Robespierre, which as yet, perhaps, was only a dream of his imagination. His ideal was unmasked. Infuriated, he fought the Girondists to the death, in the name of virtue. He slandered them atrociously.[1] With Marat, he prevented the reconciliation between the parties, which might perhaps have altered the fate of France.

Marat and Robespierre, greatly as they differed in character and ideals, were at this time the representatives, in the Mountain, of the insurrectionary tendency, and the violent policy which consisted in the absolute destruction of the adverse party.

Danton seemed to be in agreement with them; but in reality he followed a totally different policy; a policy of conciliation, whose object was to form, with the wiser elements of the Gironde and the Mountain, a third party, which, with the help of the centre, would have had a majority in the Convention, and would have governed.

Both in character and ideals, Danton formed a striking contrast to Robespierre.

The foundation of Robespierre's character was a belief in the neo-Christianity of Rousseau, the religion

[1] See the exordium and peroration of his speech of April 10th. However, we shall see later on that at certain moments he was not absolutely hostile to Danton's policy of conciliation. He hesitated and contradicted himself. His personal hatreds triumphed over the counsels of wisdom. We may also suspect that he was afraid of being surpassed in popularity by Marat, if he had dealings with the Girondists.

of the *Vicaire Savoyard*, and his supreme but so far secret aim was to make this religion the religion of France. Danton does not seem to have believed in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul ; one of those dogmas essential to society according to his rival. An atheist rather, he declared to the Revolutionary Tribunal : " My dwelling-place will soon be in nothingness." If he spoke once or twice of the " God of the universe," of the " Supreme Being," we feel that he meant the " enlarged " God of Diderot. He was no philosopher. He did not, like Robespierre, dream of changing the soul of the nation. Leave the people their priests, but see that the latter do not do too much mischief in the State ; spread education ; trust to time ; and, while waiting, since the mass of the nation is Catholic, do not wound the religious sentiment, even by the separation of Church and State, which, good in itself, would be premature in 1792 and 1793.

Politically Danton had no system, except to let conduct be ruled by reason, or rather reason enlightened by history. He was a democrat, but proposed no programme for organising the democracy, except the spread of public education. He never outstripped opinion. He was a republican of the morrow. Since the Republic exists, let us accept it ; let us make use of it to save the country and the Revolution. His method is to act from day to day, resolving, in an empirical manner, the immediate difficulties as they present themselves.

First we will expel the Parisians ; afterwards, we shall see. The Prussians are defeated and Belgium is conquered : let us negotiate with Prussia and Austria.

War is declared against England ; let us nevertheless negotiate with England. The Brissot propaganda is alarming Europe : let us disown it, and suddenly change the foreign policy of the Revolution.

Danton was responsible for the decree of April 13, 1793, by which the Convention declared that it would not meddle in the home affairs of any other nation.

At home he was in favour of preventing discord at any price ; by concessions, by false appearances at need, by an alliance of the well-meaning men of all parties, with a view to forming a solid and homogeneous Government, which should produce on Europe and the anti-revolutionary factions the impression that the republicans were agreed among themselves ; to sacrifice everything, even the truth at times, to the propagation and triumph of this impression ; to oppose individual passions with the idea of the native land ; not a vague and mystical fatherland, but the actual, tangible France : this was Danton's policy. Hatred and vengeance he ignores. Publicly calumniated, he does not waste time in defending himself. He sacrifices his reputation and his honour ; he allows men to call him "the drinker of blood." He believes in the omnipotence of material things, and of gold. Not venal, he seems so, and that he seems so is a matter of indifference to him.

His sober, lucid eloquence invites to immediate action ; he does not leave his hearers for a moment uncertain as to what they must do, and the means of doing it. A man of action and a fighter, his advice is rapid and precise ; not based upon principles, but yet conforming as closely as possible to the spirit of the Revolution.

Danton's policy is precisely what in our days is known as "opportunism," if that word be understood in a favourable sense. Danton springs from Mirabeau, as Gambetta proceeds from Danton.

He was not so popular as Marat or Robespierre. His language, stark, abrupt, and simple, and by no means academical, may perhaps have been admired by a few fastidious people ; but it lacked the ornate-

ness that pleased the people. The Faubourg Saint-Antoine kept the memory of Robespierre and Marat for many long years, by oral tradition; it soon forgot Danton. Yet he was, in his hour, the great national figure; the head of the national defences, the herald of patriotism. His period of greatest eminence was September, 1792. It rested solely with himself, although his eloquence was not of a kind to stir the unlettered masses, to win for himself a lasting and widespread popularity, both in Paris and in the departments. But he did not stop to concern himself in the matter; out of sincerity, simplicity, and indifference, he fell into a kind of apathy; there was a lack of sequence in his activities.[1]

These three men, Marat, Robespierre, and Danton, so different in their characters and their attitudes, were the most eminent, most influential members of the Mountain; one might almost say the leaders.

What were their followers at the period we are considering? Marat was alone, and the 96 members of Convention who signed his address, in April, 1793, only did so as a matter of tactics. It is extremely difficult to say who were Robespierre's friends at this period; if we name Saint-Just, Le Bas, and Couthon, it is because later on they appeared closely tied to him. But can we say they were his followers between September, 1792, and July, 1793; and were there really Dantonists during the same period? Camille Desmou-

[1] I may refer the reader to the articles on Danton which I have published in the review, *La Révolution Française*, vols. xxiv. and xxv. See also Bougeart, *Danton, documents authentiques*, &c. (1861); Robinet, *Danton, Mémoire sur sa vie privée* (1865); *Le Procès des Dantonistes; Danton, homme d'État.* In these works the accusations of venality and cruelty so often brought against Danton are excellently refuted; but the method of apology is too systematic. Dr. Robinet in particular sees in Danton the wisest and most able man of his time, the true leader of the Revolution. But the facts show that however considerable was the part played by Danton we cannot call it preponderant.

lins was still at Robespierre's side ; Fabre d'Églantine eulogised the massacres that Danton blamed ; Philippeaux was attached to no one. The Dantonists were rather the members of the first Committee of Public Safety, who gave Danton an actual preponderance. Or rather there were, at this period, neither Maratists, nor Robespierrists, nor Dantonists in the proper sense of the word ; no one, as yet, had accepted a leader of the Mountain ; there were only individuals who were provisionally grouped together by a wholly negative sentiment, that of danger, and whom the departmental policy of the Girondists summoned to the task of the national defence.

## VI.

The conflict between the Gironde and the Mountain, between the departmental policy and the Parisian policy, began on the morrow of the establishment of the Republic. On September 23, 1792, in a report read before the Convention, Roland demanded that the Assembly should have a special Guard, as if it were not safe in Paris ; and Buzot and Kersaint, on the 24th, obtained a decree nominating six commissioners whose duty it would be to give an account of the state of France and Paris, to present a proposal for a law against inciters to murder and assassination, and to report on the means of providing the Convention with a public force, to be at its disposal, and to be drawn from the eighty-three departments. We can see how it was ; from Mme. Roland's *salon* came the initiative of the war against Paris. The orders were to represent the city which had elected Marat and Robespierre, but not Petion, as a dangerous place for the Convention ; that is, to excite the hatred of the departments against Paris. On September 25th Lasource proposed to reduce Paris to its eighty-third share of influence ;

while Brissot's *Patriote français* fulminated against the Parisian deputies, whom he treated as anarchists and pillagers. But that very day, feeling that such discord would compromise the fruits of the victory of Valmy, Danton brought the debate to a close in a solemn demonstration of concord and unity. Having repudiated the idea of a dictatorship or a triumvirate, and roughly disowning Marat, he reduced the Girondists to a tardy disavowal of their pretended Federalism, and expounded the idea that the deputies represented, not each a department, but France ; proposed "unity of representations and execution" as the basis of republican and democratic politics ; and finally declared that before "this sacred harmony" the enemy would feel themselves defeated. Robespierre and Marat had to revive the quarrel by justifying themselves, by "spreading themselves," their *egos*. But Danton had, for the moment, effected a reconciliation, and after some hesitation the debate terminated in a decree by which the Republic was declared "one and indivisible."

By no means all the Girondists approved of the Rolandist declaration of war upon Paris. Rabaut Saint-Étienne, in a very remarkable article which appeared in the *Chronique de Paris* of September 27th, recommended, as did Danton, a reconciliation between the departments and Paris. Let Paris remember that though she sets the fashion for the departments, she is nothing without them. Let her beware of violent action ; let her mistrust all agitators.

"Departments!" says Rabaut, "keep yourselves always intimately bound to the central city. For there are united your deputies, your finances, your thoughts, your desires, your fears : all that disquiets or rejoices or exalts you. There end and there begin all the political threads whose least commotion makes itself felt at the furthest extremities. Paris is the city of the departments ; and I should like to see in practice the idea of dividing her into eighty-three districts,

which should bear the names of the greater geographical divisions of the Republic. Paris is your native country; all her children are your brothers, your kinsmen, your friends, for the greater number are born far from the walls of Paris; they have sprung from your bosom. There are not several Frances. There cannot be several French Republics in France. We were not united in order to separate; the federation of July 14th has made us one sole country of brothers: the Field of Mars is the field of the French; it is our common religion; eighty-three flags float around it; one day eighty-three altars will surround the majestic altar of Liberty; eighty-three deputies will repair to it to throw their incense upon it; as many young maidens will lay crowns there, pure as the Deity who shall receive our homage. I salute you, Divinity of lofty souls! I salute you; I, who, born a hundred and fifty leagues from the central city, am happy in bearing, from my country to Paris and from her to my country, the commerce of my thoughts, my feelings, my desires. O sacred union, solemn federation of hearts! make us forget the misfortunes which have afflicted us without casting us down, and let us mingle with the courage which inspires us to rise all as one to confound the tyrants the sensibility which leads us to embrace our brothers and bathe their cheeks with our tears."

We have seen that Condorcet, in the same journal (November 1st) preaches concord between the departments and Paris. He had also, on October 1st, censured the enthusiasm for Roland manifested by the Convention, and he never lost an opportunity, in his reports of the sessions, of demonstrating the wisdom and political sense of Danton.

Moreover, in the early days of the Republic, even among the Girondists who wished to make war upon Robespierre, Marat, and the "dictatorship" of Paris, there were those who were ready to rally round Danton; above all when he had obtained the decree preserving the rights of property. Thus, Gorsas congratulates him cordially in his *Courrier des départements*, and Kersaint, in the Convention, publicly expressed his regret that he had formerly taken Danton for a factious person.

On the other hand, there was not at that time a single prominent Montagnard (with the exception of

Marat) to oppose Danton's attempts to effect a reconciliation with the conciliatory section of the Mountain. Even Robespierre, as we shall see if we read with care his *Letters to his Constituents*, exhibits a certain leaning towards conciliation ; but the Rolandists soon disgusted him by their deliberate rancour against his person.

It must also be noted that the Rolandists were excited and encouraged by the departments themselves. Thus, the administrators of the department of Finistère printed an address to the forty-eight sections of Paris (October 10, 1792), in which we read :

"Citizens, blood must be shed only by the sword of the law ; the lists of the proscribed must disappear for ever from the land of liberty. Remember that a single city does not make the laws for the whole republic ; remember to whom belongs the glory of August 10th. Do you think we have broken the fetters of despotism and royalty only to resume those of the infamous intriguers who desire a dictatorship or a triumvirate ? No ! we want a republic, and we want it entire. Beware, then, of the agitators who are deceiving you. Let the National Convention work in tranquillity at the Constitution it is preparing for us. If it cannot find peace in your midst, there are other cities that can procure it peace."

And the authors of this address take the oath "to recognise no other authority than that of the National Convention, and to die in its defence." On October 20th an address was read in the Convention from the department of Calvados :

"Woe to any section of the Republic that shall pretend to govern itself according to its own will ! It will soon learn that in our great family there is only a single will, to which all partial interests are compelled to yield. Republicans listen to and follow the laws alone ; egoism and faction are unknown to them. Henceforth whosoever does not respect the laws must find a Scævola if he would not encounter the fasces of the prætors. Legislators, be Catos in Paris ; but here let each be a Brutus."

These were not vain threats. The departments announced the despatch of National Guards to Paris.

These new Federals arrived in a crowd, as if to form the departmental guard that the Convention had so far only decided upon in principle. At the call of Barbaroux a second battalion of Marseillais Federals, formed of wealthy young men, came to defend the Convention against Paris.

As early as October 21, 1792, these Federals were declaring, at the bar, that they would protect the Convention against "the greedy agitators for a tribune or a dictator." They were soon so numerous that on October 29th there was a whole army, which seemed to be supporting Louvet against Robespierre.

This accusation is one of the most celebrated episodes of the quarrel between the Gironde and the Mountain. "Robespierre," said Louvet, "I accuse you of having for a long time calumniated the purest patriots. . . . I accuse you of continually putting yourself forward as an object of idolatry. . . . I accuse you finally of having obviously aimed at the supreme power. . . ." But Louvet adduced no definite facts to support his accusation, nor any practical sanction for it. Robespierre obtained eight days in which to prepare his reply, and wisely defended himself with modesty and address. The Assembly, although at this time Girondist, was obliged to pass on to the general orders of the day, and Robespierre left it with an increased reputation, only strengthened by the thoughtless quarrel forced upon him by Louvet.[1]

This quarrel was by no means a friendly quarrel; it was embittered by threats of death. Federals sang

[1] The unthinking and heedless behaviour of the insurrectionary Girondists is well exemplified by Guadet's attitude in the Convention on December 9, 1792. He obtained a decree that the primary assemblies should meet to pronounce on the fate of members who had betrayed their country. Then, as a result of remarks that were made to him, he himself demanded the adjournment of his proposition, and the Convention recalled its decree (*Moniteur*, xiv. 701, 702).

a threatening song in the streets, of which the refrain ran thus :

*La tête de Marat, Robespierre et Danton,*
*Et de tous ceux qui les défendront,*
*O gué !*

The Jacobins had expelled Brissot from the club (October 10, 1792) ; Louvet, Lanthenas, Roland, and Girey-Dupré were the next to be expelled (November 26th). The Girondists attempted to detach the affiliated societies from the central club ; and the latter did in fact receive complaints and threats of secession on the part of the societies of Riom, Châlons, Mans, Valognes, Nantes, Lorient, Bayonne, Perpignan, Lisieux, and Bordeaux. But this movement soon miscarried, and there was no serious secession.

For the Federals, the Jacobins undertook to convert them to the Parisian policy of the Mountain. They had galleries built specially for their use. On January 9, 1793, they even admitted them to the hall, so that they might assemble and spend the morning in deliberation. Nevertheless, on the 13th a deputation of Federals demanded and obtained permission from the Convention "to share with the citizens of Paris the guard of the representatives of the French people." Had the Girondists conquered? By no means ; the deputation was far from representing the majority of the Federals. No later than the following day there was a striking demonstration in the contrary direction. At the invitation of the section of the Arcis, "the Federative Assembly of the Eighty-four Departments," composed of a deputation of the forty-eight sections, Federals from the eighty-four departments, Friends of Liberty, Cordeliers, members of the electoral body, of the sixteen cantons of the department, Marseillais Federals, and the garrison cavalry, met in the Church of Saint-Bon ; and the entire deputation swore to de-

fend to the death the unity and indivisibility of the Republic, liberty, property, and the security of the person; to preserve the union and fraternity of all Frenchmen, and finally to compass the death of all tyrants. Then they chanted the *Marseillaise*. The Commune despatched the minutes of this assembly all over France. On January 17th there was a similar demonstration in the Place de Carrousel, at which the Council General of the Commune and the Jacobins were present. The "pamphlets of Roland" were burned; the approaching execution of Louis XVI was acclaimed, and much the same oath was taken as on the 14th of the month.

In this way the departmental movement provoked by the Girondists rapidly turned against them, and the Federals quickly became Parisianised.

The Girondists made another miscalculation when they thought to rid themselves of the Insurrectional Commune of August 10th. Petion, the re-elected Mayor, having resigned, Chambon, a moderate, was elected in his place, and a general election was held for the almost complete renewal of the Commune. These elections were Montagnard. Two of the bitterest enemies of the Rolandists and the Brissotins, Chaumette and Hébert, became one the procurator and the other the procurator-substitute of the Commune. The new Commune (December 2, 1792) was as hostile to the Girondists as its predecessor. It is true that the mayor was an anti-Montagnard; but he resigned, and was replaced by Pache (February 14, 1793), who, out of 15,000 votes, obtained nearly 12,000.

The trial of Louis XVI was an occasion of fresh conflict between the two parties. The Montagnards accused the Girondists of wishing to save the King; but if we except Thomas Paine, who certainly did all he could to save him; Rabaut Saint-Étienne, who

voted for imprisonment ; and Condorcet, who recommended the severest possible penalty short of death, the principal Girondists voted either for the capital sentence, to be executed after the acceptance of the Constitution, as did Brissot, Buzot, and Louvet, or for unconditional death. Among those who voted for the latter were Vergniaud, Guadet, Ducos, Boyer-Fonfrède, Barbaroux, and Petion. Even the suggested delay, supported by Brissot, was rejected by Gensonné, Vergniaud, and Barbaroux. On the other hand, the ratification of the sentence by the primary assemblies, or the *appeal to the people*, was commended and voted by the most notable Girondists, with the exception of Condorcet, Ducos, and Isnard. The Mountain saw in this proposal a means of warfare against the Commune and the deputies of Paris ; one of the applications of the scheme for swamping the influence of Paris in that of the departments. Buzot owned as much in the tribune, on December 28, 1792 :

"It is essential," he said, "that all the departments shall immediately be the mouthpieces of their own will ; it is essential that this general will, plainly pronounced, shall stifle all fractional wills, and thus present the hope and the means of a national and peaceful insurrection against the designs of a certain ambitious few, or even against the error and the tyranny of the representatives, should they ever be guilty of such."

The appeal to the people was rejected by 484 votes against 283, but the voice of those in favour of the appeal was not without echo in the departments. The departmental administration of Finistère demanded the expulsion of Marat, Robespierre, Danton, Chabot, Basire, and Merlin (of Thionville), and invited the other departments to collaborate with it in sending an armed force to Paris. The administration of Haute-Loire offered to come and assist the Convention in subjugating the Commune of Paris. Other departments —those of Cantal and Var—were raising an armed force

to march on the capital. There was a departmental movement against Paris.

At the same time, however, there was a communal movement against the Girondists, which became more marked in February, 1793. The Republican Club of Marseilles disowned Barbaroux, denounced him, and demanded his recall, as well as that of all the deputies in favour of the appeal to the people. On February 27th it was announced at the Jacobins in Paris that the majority of the affiliated clubs were demanding the recall of the "appealers." On March 1st, on the motion of Jeanbon Saint-André, the parent society decided to exclude all the deputies who had voted in favour of the appeal. The communes declared decidedly, either through their municipalities or their people's clubs, against the Girondists, who now, generally speaking, had only the departments in their favour. Roland had to resign from the Ministry of the Interior (January 22nd), the Convention having suppressed a "bureau for the formation of the public spirit," which it had organised in order to support its anti-Parisian politics.

At the news of the first defeat of Dumouriez, who was supposed to be the tool of the Girondists, there was a popular rising in Paris, on March 9th and 10th, which was the beginning and the precursor of the risings of May 31st and June 2nd. However, this upheaval, in which none of the Montagnard leaders directly took part, resulted in nothing, chiefly because the Finistère Federals, by a sudden manœuvre, took the Convention under their protection. The insurgents confined themselves to breaking up the plant of two Girondist journals : the *Courrier des départements* and the *Chronique de Paris*.

Then came the first news of the risings in Anjou and Poitou ; that is, of the Vendéean insurrection.

Amid these pressing dangers Danton endeavoured

to effect a reconciliation between the two parties. Serious negotiations were entered into. Thus Marat tells us that on March 15th, in the hall of the Committee of General Defence, Danton and Guadet had a conference which ended in nothing. He pretends that Guadet sought to conciliate Danton by outrageous sycophancy. The *Patriote français* protested : " Guadet flatter Danton ! Well, well ! Guadet maintained to Danton, firstly, that there had been a conspiracy ; secondly, that he was its ringleader. What a sycophant ! " It is probable that Marat wrote in this strain merely to wound the irritable self-love of Guadet, and so to render impossible a reconciliation which he did not desire. The only precise details we have concerning these negotiations between Danton and Guadet are given by contemporaries who wrote long afterwards, and who, perhaps, were not present at the conference which they describe. Thus the deputy Paganel writes : " Negotiators are sent from this quarter and that ; they meet together. Danton speaks as a citizen and a statesman. 'Royalty,' he says, 'insatiable of vengeance, will be born again of our quarrels. Pitt and Condé are watching us.' " Carried away by his example, all are ready to take part in and to testify to the reconciliation. Guadet alone refuses it ; Guadet, who had displayed some talent, and concealed so much bitterness, ambition, and envy. " War," he cries, " war, and may one of the parties perish ! " He rallies his colleagues, frozen with terror. Danton seizes his hand, and says, with an intense and prophetic voice : " You ask for war : you shall have death." [1] We have no means of confirming this story, which is possibly dramatised. But putting Marat aside, contemporaries are agreed that Guadet was an intractable person.[2]

[1] *Essai historique,* iii. 473. See p. 64 of this volume as to what Bailleul says of the actual relations between Guadet and Danton.

[2] "Twenty times," said Danton to Garat, "I have offered them peace : they have not desired it : they refused to believe in me, in order to retain the right to ruin me" (Garat, *Mémoires*).

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The conciliatory policy of Danton was so evidently suited to the necessities of the moment that Robespierre himself could not refuse negotiations. The deputy Maure related at the Jacobins, on March 17th, that on the day before, in the Convention, he had approached Petion, and had told him that the only means of putting an end to the division between the parties was to persuade the Girondists to conspire no longer in the Committees and no longer to impede the current of the public spirit. "This conversation," he added, "led to an extremely friendly conversation between Buzot and Robespierre. They were hoping for a reconciliation yesterday. My hopes were cruelly disappointed, and I am now convinced that reconciliation was impossible."

Dumouriez' treason exasperated the people of Paris against the Girondists, but in the Convention there was a majority to support the conciliatory policy of Danton; who, while attacking the Girondists from the tribune, sought to prevent the two parties from coming to blows. We have seen that the Convention formed the first Committee of Public Safety (April 6 and 7, 1793) of men who were immune to the passions of the Robespierrists or the Rolandists; such as Cambon, Robert Lindet, Delacroix, and Danton himself, who was the leader of this new Government.

Almost immediately, however, after this access of wisdom, the Convention betrayed Marat to the Revolutionary Tribunal (April 13th), and thus in a moment awakened the sleeping quarrel.

On April 15th there was an alarming demonstration against the Girondists. The sections of Paris, accompanied by the mayor, Pache, went to the bar of the Convention to demand that twenty-two of the principal Girondist deputies should be deprived of their powers.[1]

[1] Their petition contained the *réserve* that this deprivation should take effect only after the primary assemblies had been consulted and

From the time of Dumouriez' treason, the Commune assumed an extremely authoritative, semi-dictatorial attitude. To this it was impelled not only by the reverses of the armies, but also by the economic situation. The question of national defence, and the question of food: these were the principal factors of all the "days," as they were called, of the Revolution: the mainsprings of insurrection. The means of life were dear, and the working classes were in want. There was a strong feeling in favour of a fixed price, a *maximum*. The mayor, the municipal officers, and the administrators of the department assembled in the hall of the Jacobins and there drew up a petition demanding the maximum, and presented it at the bar of the Convention on April 18th. "Let no one," they said, "urge on us the right of property. The right of property cannot be the right to starve one's fellow-citizens. The fruits of the earth, like the air, belong to all men." They also demanded the abolition of the speculation in grain, the suppression of all middlemen between the cultivator and consumer, and a general verification of the total amount of grain after each harvest. Vergniaud protested against these latter demands. The petition was referred to the Committee of Agriculture. In the evening, on a motion of Chaumette's, the Council General of the Commune declared that "it would remain in a state of revolution while subsistences were not assured." The Convention yielded; it decreed, on May 4, 1793, a maximum price of grains, in conformity with the demands of Paris.

had emitted a similar request. Boyer-Fonfrède made this ironical remark: "Then are the sections federalist?" On the evening of the 15th the Commune disowned this part of the petition. It did not wish to demand the convocation of the primary assemblies, "but the punishment of the treacherous deputies who have betrayed the cause of the people." And it ordered the despatch of a deputation to the Convention to notify it of this correction.

The Commune also busied itself with opposing to the Girondist federation of the departments a Montagnard federation of the communes. On April 29th it addressed to all the communes of France a solemn manifesto, which is a clear expression of its policy at the height of the quarrel between the Gironde and the Mountain.

The Commune, to begin with, stated that the Girondist manœuvres had been checkmated.

"They have been completely disappointed, these traitors who wished to lead a departmental force to Paris, to surround the representatives of the people with a prætorian guard, in order to dominate us by means of terror, and to pursue the execution of their ambitious designs. These departmental volunteers, whom they managed to get to Paris without waiting for the decree which was to create and organise the guard; these volunteers, whom they had succeeded only too well in inflaming by the most exaggerated accounts, whom they had prejudiced against the inhabitants of Paris, had hardly been with us a few days, when, impressed by the pure and pronounced civic spirit which they remarked in this immense city, enchanted by the simple and brotherly welcome which they received at the hands of these so-called factions, whom it was necessary, so they were told, to recall to their duty, they abjured all their prepossessions, and formed a solemn union with ourselves, at which the hypocritical agitators are trembling, and which, by a singular coincidence, was consecrated by oath in front of the château of the Tuileries, at the moment when the National Convention was deliberating on the fate of the tyrant, and on the eve of his execution."

A bureau of correspondence with the 44,000 municipalities was the means by which the Commune proposed to arouse and develop the public spirit.

"The Council General has formed the project of maintaining with you a direct and friendly correspondence, and especially of writing to you as frequently as it finds possible. It believes it to be of great importance to give you positive ideas as to the state of the public mind in Paris, and news of the good and evil actions of the individuals who have any influence in the political whirlpool; and more especially to apprise you of the vigorous resolutions which it may take for the

purpose of safeguarding the public welfare. Be so good as to reply to our letters, and thus give a fresh activity to the patriotism which animates us all."

But the citizens of Paris did not intend to form a dictatorship, to usurp power :

"Beware of giving credence to the accusation, as odious as it is absurd, that Paris desires to arrogate to herself any pre-eminence over the other cities, or over the smallest commune of the Republic. No, citizens ; all the communes of France should be sisters, as all republicans are brothers. Set in the centre of events, the focus in which are gathered most of the forces of the political machine, Paris has only more duties to fulfil," &c. What is required is a fraternal understanding between the communes of France : "Consent, therefore, to help us with your advice ; even to enlighten us as to our faults ; and thus eventually establish between us a community of ideals and of sentiments which can only have the happiest results."

The Commune of Paris tried in vain to appear modest, to assume a conciliatory, pacific tone : the departments beheld Paris dominating and intimidating the Convention. The anti-Girondist petition of April 15th, which was itself provoked by the anti-Montagnard petitions of the departments, provoked indignant and threatening protests. On May 14th there was read at the bar of the Convention an address from the citizens of Bordeaux, who announced that they were about to march upon Paris unless "a decree of retaliation and vengeance" arrested them. From all sides came fresh disquieting news ; a departmental *coup d'état* was preparing against Paris and the Mountain.

The Commune then decided upon a revolutionary action ; it nominated, illegally, a provisional Commandant of the National Guard : General Boulanger. The Gironde, exasperated, proposed two serious measures the next day : firstly, to break the Commune ; secondly, to assemble the substitute deputies at Bourges. The motion was about to pass ; had it passed, there would

have been civil war. The Committee of Public Safety, which so far had been silent amid all this discord, intervened in the person of Barère, who emphatically disowned the Commune, and thus, instead of cassation, obtained the appointment of a commission of twelve members who should make an inquiry. This Commission, composed of ardent Girondists, denounced, on the 24th, the "crimes" of the Commune and its "conspiracy" against the Convention; and obtained the passing of such measures of precaution as the reenforcement of the Guard of the Assembly, and such measures of aggression as the arrest of Hébert and two municipal officers. The Committee of Public Safety, on May 25th, declared itself neutral: "Your Committee of Public Safety," said Barère, who boasted of belonging to no party, "no longer regards the influence of Marat more than that of Brissot." On the same day the Girondist Isnard, who was then President of the Convention, made this threatening reply to a deputation from the Commune which came clamouring for Hébert: "If, in the course of these ever-recurring insurrections, it should ever happen that the national representatives were subjected to violence, I declare to you in the name of all France that in a little one might search the banks of the Seine to discover whether Paris had ever existed." Danton tried in vain to induce the Convention to disown these threats, which recalled the Duke of Brunswick's manifesto; Isnard's reply was approved by a formal vote. Nevertheless, the Committee of Public Safety obtained the release of Hébert (May 27th), and even the suppression of the Commission of Twelve. But this later decree was revoked the next day. The Convention hesitated, contradicted itself, had no fixed policy.

It was at this time that the Committee made a supreme effort to prevent civil war and to form a governmental party. On May 29th it presented, through

Barère, in the form of a general report, a programme of reconciliation and of action, which in part was drawn up by Danton himself, and in which the Government, while censuring the Commune, made an appeal for concord in the face of foreign nations.[1] The following day the Committee, to satisfy the Montagnards as well, added to their number Hérault de Séchelles, Ramel, Saint-Just, Mathieu, and Couthon, and, raising their minds above the quarrels of the day, procured a decree for the establishment of a primary school in each commune of at least four hundred inhabitants. This language and these measures disarmed neither the Girondists nor the Commune. Robespierre, at the Jacobins, on May 26th, approved of the idea of an insurrection directed against the Rolandists and the Brissotins. The bad news from La Vendée and the armies had fevered men's minds. Civil war was about to break out.

Or rather, it had broken out already; at the very moment when Barère was reading his conciliatory report. The Girondists of Lyons took the initiative in the insurrection. On May 29th the sections of this city, in league with the departmental administration of Rhône-et-Loire, rose against the Commune of Lyons,

[1] *Rapport général sur l'état de la République française*, by Barère. We read in *Le Républicain, journal des hommes libres de tous les pays* (edited by the deputy Charles Duval), for May 30, 1793: "Barère then presented the general report of the Committee of Public Safety upon our internal and external situation. It is too long for a rapid analysis to satisfy our readers. We should wish them to enjoy it in full, but will nevertheless announce to-day that it is to Danton, so calumniated as he is, so often painted in the most atrocious colours, that we owe the paragraph in which the Committee insists on the necessity of a republican Constitution, the establishment of primary schools, the further safeguarding of properties, the re-establishment of order, and the reign of law and morality, and above all the stifling of those passions which are dividing the representatives of the same people, and which turn the palace of Unity into the temple of Discord."

which body was Montagnard, and obeyed the counsel of the extreme democrat Chalier. There was a sanguinary fight ; the Hôtel de Ville was taken by the Girondist sectionaries, aided by moderates and royalists in disguise, and a reactionary and illegal municipality replaced the legal Jacobin municipality. Not long afterwards Chalier, who had been thrown into prison, was guillotined (July 16th).

One cannot say that the Montagnard *coup d'état* of Paris was a reply to the Girondist *coup d'état* of Lyons ; for the events of the Lyonnais insurrection did not reach Paris until after June 2nd. But what was preparing in the departments was known in Paris, and the Montagnard insurgents rose in order not to be struck themselves.

This insurrection was conducted as follows :

The sections of Paris named commissioners, who met at the episcopal palace, where a kind of insurrectionary club was already sitting. During the night of May 30th this committee had the barriers closed and the tocsin sounded. At half-past six in the morning it repaired to the Hôtel de Ville, dissolved the Council General of the Commune in the name of the sections, and then re-established it by a revolutionary investiture. (The same thing was done with the Council and Directory of the Department of Paris.) Each member swore to be faithful to the Republic, one and indivisible, to maintain " sacred liberty, sacred equality, the security of persons, and respect for property," and " to live with his brothers in republican unity." Hanriot was nominated provisional commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The posts were taken over, courriers stopped, letters seized and opened. The insurrection was the master of Paris.

At the sound of the tocsin the Convention assembled. It sent for the Mayor of Paris, Pache, to come to the bar, and the procurator-general-syndic of the department,

Julier ; they protested that nothing was afoot but a "moral revolution." It was proposed to suppress the Commission of Twelve. Vergniaud did not absolutely oppose the suggestion, but desired a previous inquiry into the subject of the alarm-gun which had just been fired. Danton spoke vehemently, but with a view to conciliation. Vergniaud obtained a decree to the effect that the sections had deserved well of their country ; he wished thereby to appeal from the Commune to Paris. Paris was prompt in reply : a deputation of all the sections, and all constituted authorities, came to the bar to demand not only the "cassation" of the Twelve, but the arrest of twenty-two of the Girondist deputies. Vergniaud proposed that this address should be printed and despatched to the departments ; this time he was appealing from Paris to France. The Committee of Public Safety resolved to yield in the matter of the Twelve, but not in the matter of the deputies denounced ; it proposed to abolish the commission, and to place the armed forces of Paris at the disposal of the Convention. But the petitioners had invaded the hall, and were sitting among the deputies. Vergniaud declared that he was not free ; he went out, but no one followed him. When he returned, Robespierre was at the tribune, speaking against the policy of the Committee. "Stop!" cried Vergniaud. "Yes," replied Robespierre, "I am coming to my conclusion, and it is against you!" And he demanded the arrest of the twenty-two. The Convention refused it ; but voted the suppression of the Twelve. This appeared to be enough for Paris. The sections rejoiced. The Faubourg Saint-Antoine, which had decided to take the war-path upon the false news that the sections favourable to the Convention had proclaimed the monarchy, recognised its mistake, and filed pacifically through the hall. On the motion of Barère, the Convention went out in a body to fraternise with

the people, who improvised a civic fête, with illuminations, and scenes of "patriotism and sensibility."

Such were the doings of May 31st, from which the Convention escaped intact, having, according to the Parisians, suffered only a moral suasion.

But what reason for dismay had the Committee of Public Safety! The Revolutionary Commune had been anxious to arrest several Ministers, and the Committee had had to represent humbly that it had not the right to do so. The Minister Clavière was a refugee. Robespierre had declared from the tribune that the "day" of May 31st was not enough. The Commune, declaring itself duped, demanded and prepared a "supplement" to the revolution. How was the Committee, which in the midst of a city in arms had no armed force at its disposal, to prevent this "supplement" by mere moral authority, broken as it was already? At the session of the Convention of June 1st, the Committee obtained the adoption, in spite of the Right, of an Address to Frenchmen, in which the "day" of May 31st was presented in a politically optimistic light. "Let us put revolutions on their trial," cried Barère, "but let us seek to gather the fruits of them." The session broke up at six o'clock, at the moment when the Commune was about to present a new petition against the twenty-two. Marat then repaired to the Hôtel de Ville, and gave, with emphatic solemnity, a "counsel" to the people; namely, to remain afoot and not to quit until victory was theirs. He himself climbed to the belfry of the Hôtel de Ville and rang the tocsin. The Convention assembled spontaneously at the sound, and heard the petition announced. A tumultuous debate followed, the Committee abandoned its attitude of neutrality, and opposed, through Barère, the measures demanded against the Girondists. The Convention voted that the accusers should be required to bring proofs, and that the Committee would then make a report.

The session of June 2nd opened with the gravest news of Lozère and the Vendée. In the morning, Hanriot had caused the Tuileries, where the Assembly was sitting, to be invested by a formidable force. No one was able to leave the hall. The Convention was a prisoner. Then, with more courage than political foresight, Lanjuinais demanded that all the revolutionary authorities should be broken, and all their acts annulled. A deputation from the Commune renewed the previous petitions ; Paris, it declared, was asking for the last time. The Assembly was apparently unperturbed, and confined itself to referring the petition to the Committee of Public Safety. It was a friend of the Girondists, Richou (of Eure) who first spoke of capitulation, and the Committee invited the accused deputies to resign provisionally. Immediately Isnard, Lanthenas, and Fauchet offered to resign. Lanjuinais and Barbaroux haughtily refused. But violence and oppression were at work ; at the doors of the hall were armed men, who thrust back the deputies who sought to leave : among them Delacroix, a member of the Committee. Delacroix protested indignantly. The whole Assembly rose, shamed and angry. Danton cried : "The French nation has just been outraged in the person of its representatives ; the uttermost reparation must be made." Barère declared that it was not for slaves to make laws ; and demanded the head of the man "who dared to make an attempt upon the liberty of a representative of the people." It was Hanriot that Barère referred to, and the Convention summoned him to the bar. Hanriot did not obey. Barère proposed that the Convention should go out in a body to demand its liberty. It went out ; was received by the insurgents with an ironical deference ; and when the President, Hérault de Séchelles, requested Hanriot to withdraw his troops he refused brutally to do so until the accused deputies had been

surrendered. The Convention was forced to re-enter the hall ; and then, humiliated and defeated, it decreed the arrest, on a motion of Couthon's, not of twenty-two, but twenty-nine deputies ; among others Gensonné, Guadet, Brissot, Petion, Vergniaud, Barbaroux, Buzot, Rabaut Saint-Étienne, Lanjuinais, Louvet, and two Ministers, Le Brun and Clavière. (The ex-Minister Roland was a refugee, and the Commune had imprisoned Mme. Roland.) The proscribed deputies were permitted to remain under arrest in their own houses, "under the safeguard of the French people and the National Convention, as well as the loyalty of the citizens of Paris." The insurgents immediately wrote to the President to offer an equal number of hostages ; Barbaroux, in the name of his friends, refused.

Such was the "day" of June 2nd, from which the Convention issued mutilated, the Committee of Public Safety diminished, and the Commune victorious. This victory of the Commune was not only the result of its own audacity, the ambitions of Robespierre, and the political incapacity of the Girondists ; it was also facilitated by the patriotic emotion caused by the military reverses.

"You wish to know," said Robespierre the younger, "what caused the tocsin to be sounded ? I will tell you : it was the treason of our generals, the perfidy that surrounded the camp of Famars, the bombardment of Valenciennes, the disorder into which the army of the North has been thrown."

The people of Paris had the idea that the discords of the Convention were the true cause of the military reverses, and were anxious to re-establish unity at the centre of the government, while annihilating that one of the two parties which seemed the less fit to govern.

We have seen how Danton endeavoured to prevent the popular insurrection.[1] When it broke out, he pre-

[1] A retrospective debate on the policy of the first Committee of

tended to support it, in order to save the prestige of the Government in the eyes of Europe. But the Committee was none the less defeated on June 2nd. The decree against the Ministers Clavière and Le Brun had angered it profoundly. If it abandoned the Minister of Taxation to his fate and replaced him by Destournelles, it did not at once wish to part with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was the faithful agent of its policy and negotiations. Le Brun continued to attend the Council, escorted by the gendarme who guarded him in his house, and this Minister, a prisoner of State, busied himself more actively than ever with State affairs. This curious situation was not terminated until the 21st, when the Convention replaced Le Brun by a friend of Danton's, Deforgues, wishing by this action to emphasise the fact that it intended to continue Danton's foreign policy, although the victors of June 2nd, and especially Robespierre, were hostile to that policy. The Committee and the Convention were struggling to react against the victory of the Commune.

Public Safety took place in the Convention, on the 1st of *Brumaire*, year III. Cambon made certain "revelations," to the effect that there had been a plot to place Louis XVII or the Duc d'Orléans on the throne. It would also seem from his statements, which were very cryptic, that Danton was in the plot; but he did not definitely say as much. He also affirmed (and was at the time corroborated by other witnesses) that the "day" of May 31st had been prepared at secret meetings which took place at Charenton, at which Danton, Robespierre, and Pache were present. From this one might conclude that Danton was really one of the leading spirits in the affair of May 31st, the more so as Cambon adds: "I have said that the first petition, which demanded the twenty-two members, was the work of Danton; I saw this, but I only" (*Moniteur*). But it does not in the least follow, because Danton had secret appointments with Robespierre and Pache at Charenton, that he therefore advised a *coup d'état* against the Girondists. As for the statement concerning the petition, does it mean that Danton drafted it? To these obscurities I oppose facts: firstly, the negotiations between Danton and the Girondists in March; secondly, the conciliatory report of Barère, of which Cambon himself affirms that Danton collaborated in its preparation.

The latter had promised to produce the facts and evidence against the Girondists ; the Committee summoned it to hold by its promise ; but the Commune evaded the point. The Committee then proposed an entire plan of defence against the Commune ; the suppression of all the Revolutionary Committees ; the right, on the part of the Convention, to requisition the armed forces of the Republic as it thought fit ; and the dispatch, under the title of hostages, of deputies "into each of the departments some of the deputies of which were placed under arrest by the decree of June 2nd." Robespierre ridiculed this scheme ; the Convention was none too anxious to provide hostages ; the idea was abandoned. On June 13th Danton adjured the Convention to make clear, in the eyes of France and of Europe, its situation with regard to the events of May 31st and June 2nd, and to take the responsibility therefor, rather than seem to have been overcome by the said events. The Robespierrists, treacherously exaggerating the idea, proposed that the Convention should congratulate the Revolutionary Commune, which had outraged it on June 2nd. The Convention declared simply "that the *citizens of Paris* had powerfully contributed to save the liberty and maintain the unity and individuality of the Republic." From this moment the "days" of May 31st and June 2nd were officially consecrated as national occasions.

## VII.

When the departments learned what had occurred in Paris there was an explosion of anger. The rebels of Lyons held out their hands to the malcontents of other departments. Addresses of protest were signed. The people of Franche-Comté, Dauphiné, Provence, Languedoc, Guyenne, and Normandy assumed a threatening attitude. It seemed as if the ancient provinces

were preparing themselves against Paris and the Revolution, and it was this movement that was called *Federalism*. Several of the proscribed deputies—Petion, Buzot, Guadet, Brissot, Barbaroux, and Louvet—escaped, and proceeded to foment the civil war in the provinces. Nearly two-thirds of the departments rose against the Convention. The latter had on her side not only the older France, but almost all the communes, whose fidelity to the central power saved the Revolution and preserved the unity of the country.

At the outset the situation looked desperate. On June 13th the Convention learned that Buzot had opened the civil war in the department of Eure, and that the directory of this department had ordered the formation of an armed force of 4,000 men to march upon Paris. The department of Calvados had imprisoned two deputy-commissaries, Romme and Prieur (of Côte-d'Or). The Convention issued decrees of accusation against the rebels ; but temporised, having as yet no means of substantiating its threats, and entered into negotiations, leaving Danton to manage a diplomatic campaign in the interior, like that he had already undertaken outside the frontiers ; and the chief means of pursuing this policy was to vote that Constitution of 1793, which was to rally to the Convention and to the Mountain all those who were not immediately compromised in the Federalist insurrection.

But these happy effects of the Constitution were not felt immediately, for several weeks elapsed before France could learn of it and ratify it. In the meantime the Committee remained faithful to its temporising methods, adjourning all severer measures against the insurgent departments. This system of indulgence was criticised during the session of July 4th, and the Committee felt that it was losing the confidence of the Assembly and the Jacobin Club, which did not forgive Danton for his attitude on May 31st and June 2nd.

Parisian opinion, disturbed at the progress of the Federal insurrection, and excited by Robespierre, demanded severe measures against the Girondists under detention or escaped. The Committee endeavoured to oppose these demands, and the report on the Girondists which Saint-Just presented in his own name on July 9th appeared moderate, as far as its conclusions went, and almost conciliatory. Certainly the report demanded that Buzot, Barbaroux, Gorsas, Lanjuinais, Salle, Louvet, Bergoeing, and Petion, as authors or accomplices of the departmental insurrection, should be declared traitors to their country. But as for the deputies remaining prisoners in Paris, Saint-Just proposed to declare "that there was cause for accusation" against those of them who were accused of complicity with the rebels, that is to say, against Gensonné, Guadet, Vergniaud, Mollevaut, and Gardien, but not to hand them over immediately to the Revolutionary Tribunal. The others, to the number of fourteen, among them Rabaut Saint-Étienne and Lasource, "deceived rather than guilty," he proposed to recall to the Convention. These proposals were adjourned. The Convention, more rigorous than its Committee, had just decreed the arrest of Condorcet, who (as we have already said) had criticised the Montagnard Constitution. At the Jacobins, the Committee and Danton were subjected to violent attacks. On the 10th the Convention censured and called to the bar General Westermann, a friend and tool of Danton's, who was defeated at Châtillon by the Vendéeans. It was proposed to renew the Committee of Public Safety, which Camille Desmoulins, become a Robespierrist, accused of incapacity. During the same session the Convention removed Danton from power, by electing a Committee of Public Safety reduced to nine members, of whom he was not one.

## CHAPTER II

### OPINIONS AND PARTIES. THE MOUNTAIN VICTORIOUS. ROBESPIERRE, HÉBERT, DANTON

(*July, 1793, to* Germinal, *Year II*)

I. Federalism.—II. Montagnard France.—III. Socialism.—IV. Hébertists and Dantonists.

### I.

DANTON fell from power because his general policy seemed to have miscarried ; since France was invaded in the north, since Federalism was spreading, since the Vendéean insurrection was unchecked. In reality this check was only apparent. The new Committee of Public Safety had at the outset merely to reap the late but fruitful harvest of the preceding Committee's policy. On July 13th, 1793, the Norman army was encountered and dispersed at Vernon, a defeat which led to the submission of all Normandy. The north of France was pacified without too much trouble, and the new Constitution rallied the citizens of the north to the Convention.

The south it was that gave most anxiety; and there persuasive methods were not always sufficient. There was the greatest likelihood that the Federalist movement, suddenly "royalised," would spread to all the departments of the south. As early as June 7th the

department of the Gironde rose in insurrection, levied an armed force, and announced its intention of assembling the Convention at Bourges. Its emissaries went forth to preach civil war throughout all Languedoc, and insurrectionary Committees of Public Safety sprang up. The departments of Gard and Bouches-du-Rhône rose and armed themselves. Those of Haute-Garonne and Hérault were happily prevented from joining in the movement by the municipalities and the popular clubs ; it was there the plan of the Bordelais miscarried. Isolated, the department of the Gironde was forced to submit, and the representatives "on mission," Ysabeau and Tallien, later on re-established there, without very great difficulty, the authority of the Convention. But in the valley of the Rhône it was necessary to employ force in order to prevent the Marseillais and the Lyonnais from getting out of hand. Lyons revolted on May 29th. Marseilles followed suit upon the news of the doings of June 2nd, and a Marseillais army marched out to join another army from Nîmes and the insurgents of Lyons. The Convention detached 1,500 men from the army of the Alps, who, while the army itself was besieging Lyons, descended the Rhône Valley under the command of General Carteaux. At the same time eighty-two Jacobin Clubs of Garde, Ardèche, and the Rhône assembled at Valence, and there declared "that the National Convention is the centre of the unity and the sole rallying point of France." It was therefore by the aid of the people's clubs (and that of the majority of the municipalities) that Carteaux' little corps was able to advance victoriously. The Marseillais had pushed as far as Orange, in order to join the men of Nîmes, who were waiting for them at the Pont-Saint-Esprit. But the announcement of the Constitution, the firm attitude of the people's clubs, and the patriotic harangues of the commissaries of the Department of Drôme, decided the men of Nîmes to

return to their homes. The Marseillais retreated, and Carteaux took possession of Avignon almost without striking a blow; for that city had been won over to the Convention by the adroit decree of June 25, 1793, which created it the capital city of a new department, that of Vaucluse, thus separating its interests from those of Marseilles. On August 24th Carteaux defeated the army of Marseilles, and the following day he entered Marseilles, at the moment when the royalists of the city were about to deliver it to the English.

The city of Lyons, however, made a desperate resistance. Summoned to surrender on August 9th, it refused, while protesting its republican sentiments; but it placed the royalist Précy at the head of its National Guard. Kellerman's army being at the outset too weak to invest the city, the deputy-commissioner Dubois-Crancé tried to intimidate the defenders by a bombardment, which commenced on August 22nd, and merely irritated the defenders. At the same time the Piedmontese were invading Savoy, and the army of the Alps was in danger of being caught between two fires. Lyons laid in a liberal stock of provisions, obtaining them from Forez, of which the principal city, Montbrison, the district capital of the department of Rhône-et-Loire, was devoted to Lyons. The same expedient was tried that had already successfully separated Avignon and Marseilles, and an order of the representatives on August 12th (confirmed on the 19th by the Convention) created the department of the Loire, with Montbrison as capital. The numerous reinforcements led from Puy-de-Dôme and the departments of the centre by Couthon, Maignet, and Châteauneuf-Randon made possible the blockade of Lyons, and a regular siege commenced. On October 8th the commissaries of the sections went to propose a capitulation, and on the 9th the Republican army entered the city. Précy, and those of the Lyonnais who were most deeply

compromised, succeeded in forcing the blockade and reaching Switzerland. The Convention, on October 12th, passed a terrible decree:

"The city of Lyons shall be destroyed. All that part of it that was inhabited by the rich shall be demolished. Only the houses of the poor will be left, the dwellings of proscribed or executed patriots, buildings specially employed for industrial uses, and monuments devoted to humanity and public instruction. The name of Lyons will be erased from the list of the cities of the Republic. The collection of houses left will henceforth bear the name of *Ville-Affranchie*." [1]

Couthon confined himself to the demolition of a few houses in the Place Bellecour; as for the inhabitants, he left it to his successors, Fouché and Collot d'Herbois, to chastise the vanquished by *mitraillades*—volleys fired into masses of them.

The insurrection of Toulon was still more serious and more difficult of suppression than that of Lyons. We have already noted that on August 28th the city proclaimed Louis XVII and delivered itself to the English. But the republicans managed to isolate the insurrection of Toulon, and after a long siege (in which Napoleon Bonaparte distinguished himself) they retook it on the 29th of *Frimaire*, year II (December 19, 1793). The Convention decreed that this happy event should be celebrated by a national festival, and that the vanquished city should lose its name (it was called *Port-de-la-Montagne*) and that a portion of its houses should be razed. After a pretence of a trial, a hundred and fifty or two hundred insurgents were shot simultaneously. Thenceforth the Montagnards ruled in Toulon.[2]

[1] This name was altered to that of Commune-Affranchie by the decree of the 10th of *Brumaire*, year II (October 31st), which abolished the titles *villes*, *bourgs*, and *villages*, in favour of *communes*.

[2] The defection of Corsica was neither Girondist nor royalist in character, but separatist. Paoli, to whom the French Government, with imprudent generosity, had confided the command of the

During the insurrections at Toulon and Lyons, insurrections of a Girondist origin, the anger of the Parisian people was so extreme that the Committee of Public Safety and the Convention decided to sacrifice the principal individuals among Girondists under arrest. A decree of October 3rd handed over all the arrested deputies to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and ordered the arrest of seventy-five deputies who had signed the protests against the procedure of June 2nd, and whom the protection of Robespierre alone saved from death. The trial commenced on October 24th. The accused were twenty-one in number: Brissot, Vergniaud, Gensonné, Lauze-Deperret, Carra, Gardien, Dufriche-Valazé, Duprat, Sillery, Claude Fauchet, Ducos, Boyer-Fonfrède, Lasource, Lesterpt-Beauvais, Duchastel, Minvielle, Lacaze, Lehardi, Boilleau, Antiboul, and Viger. It was difficult to include men of such diverse natures in a single accusation of conspiracy; and the Public Accuser, Fouquier-Tinville, confined himself to repeating the vague and contradictory complaints enumerated in a report of Amar's. The interrogation and the depositions could not establish any charge in common against the accused. The witnesses heard were all unfavourable, and expressed more clearly than anything

25th military division, attempted to make Corsica independent under British protection. The French, as formerly the Genoese, were very soon masters of the coasts only. The Convention divided Corsica into two departments, and outlawed Paoli and his chief supporters. But it could send only a small army to Corsica; an army which struggled for a long time, thanks to the energy of the deputy-commissary Lacombe Saint-Michel, against the combined efforts of Paoli and the English fleet. The English captured successively Saint-Florent, Bastia, and Calvi. A General Assembly of the Corsican people (June, 1794) offered the crown of Corsica to George III, who accepted it. But Paoli was not appointed viceroy, as the Corsicans had hoped; the English commissioner, Sir Gilbert Elliot, was invested with viceregal powers. Paoli was sent to London. Corsica became an English province. The English could not enforce their rule, and in 1796 evacuated the island, which became French once more.

else the hatred of the Mountain for the Girondists. The trial dragged slowly on. At the end of six days only nine witnesses had been heard, and it seemed to the Jacobins that public opinion was wavering. On October 29th the club demanded that the Convention "should disembarrass the Tribunal of the forms which stifle the conscience and prevent conviction"; *i.e.*, should prevent Vergniaud and his fellow-prisoners from defending themselves; and they obtained a decree which authorised the president of the Revolutionary Tribunal (which title was finally bestowed by this decree) to ask the juries, after three days of debate, if their consciences were sufficiently enlightened. Accordingly, after the interrogation of the accused, and before any of them could begin his defence, the jury declared itself sufficiently enlightened (October 30th), and found the accused guilty of "conspiracy against the unity and indivisibility of the Republic, and against the welfare and safety of the French people." Fouquier-Tinville demanded the death penalty. Indignant at being thus killed without trial, the accused rose, shouting protests, and one of them, Dufriche-Valazé, stabbed himself to death. The president sent them out of court, and the Tribunal pronounced the sentence of death, which was executed on the following day (the 10th of *Brumaire* of the year II).

It was soon Mme. Roland's turn; condemned to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal, she was guillotined on the 18th of *Brumaire* (November 8th). Roland killed himself on the 20th of *Brumaire*, at Radepont in Eure. Manuel was executed on the 24th; and Rabaut Saint-Étienne on the 15th of *Frimaire*. Condorcet committed suicide on the 9th of *Germinal* of the year II (March 29, 1794). As for the deputies who had attempted to raise civil war in the provinces, their supporters abandoned them, and they were pitilessly hunted. Louvet, Isnard, and others succeeded in hiding

themselves, and survived. But Salle and Guadet were guillotined in Bordeaux on the 1st of *Messidor* (June 19, 1794), and Barbaroux suffered the same fate on the 7th of *Messidor*. On the following day, in a field near Saint-Emilion, the bodies of Buzot and Petion were found, half-eaten by dogs. A friend of the Girondists, the ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Le Brun, was condemned by the Revolutionary Tribunal of the 7th of *Nivôse* (December 27, 1793). His colleague Clavière killed himself in prison, on the 18th of *Frimaire* (December 8, 1793).

## II.

The triumph of the Montagnards was complete. Already they dominated the whole of France; they had done so since the acceptation of the Constitution of 1793. The delegates of the primary assemblies, sent to Paris with the *procès-verbaux* of the vote, understood and accepted the "day" of June 2nd, and, indoctrinated by the Jacobins of Paris, performed the same service for their fellow-citizens upon their return to their several towns or villages. The general levy led to such demonstrations that it is not enough to say that from this time (September, 1793) republicanism became intensified; for it also took a new form, which, to differentiate it from Federative republicanism, was known as Montagnard; not only in Paris, but throughout all France.

Thus at Orléans, on September 3rd, a public and popular meeting, under the presidency of the Deputy Laplanche, was opened with "unanimous cries of '*Vive la République!*' '*Vive la Sainte Montagne!*'" The deputy Chambon wrote from Chalon-sur-Saône, on the 30th of the same month:

"What a day was yesterday at Chalon-sur-Saône! I had invited the people's club, last Friday, to hold its meeting at Saint-Vincent, and to

make an appeal to the people. It was not in vain that I had hoped to assemble all the people of Chalon. An immense crowd was in the church long before the time of the meeting; one could no longer tell rich from poor, aristocrat from patriot; the ones abjured their errors, the others opened their treasuries to their country, and the sacred temple resounded only to cries of *'Vive la République!' 'Union, brotherhood, love of country!' 'Vive la liberté!' 'Life to the holy Mountain that has saved the people!'*"

When the deputies entered Bordeaux after the local insurrection (October, 1793) "the *sans-culottes*," so they write, "came out in a crowd before us, branches of laurel in their hands, and accompanied us, shouting *'Vive la République!' 'Vive la Montagne!'*"

As for *sans-culotterie*, the cult of the unbreeched, as early as January, 1793, the Commune of Paris had changed the Feast of Kings into a Feast of the Breechless. But it was only when the Montagnard party had triumphed that the ardent and militant republicans called themselves *sans-culottes*. *Sans-culotterie* was warlike Montagnard republicanism; directed not only against the royalists and the Girondists, but against the rich, against the *bourgeois* spirit, against the *muscadins*.[1]

At the same time manners became still more democratic.

From the time of its first session, the Convention had set the example of substituting the word *citizen* for *monsieur*, a change which immediately became general.

The use of the second person singular—*tutoiement*—had not become a custom. It was only when the Montagnard party was definitely triumphant that the Committee of Public Safety took the initiative of *tutoiement* in its official correspondence, beginning on the 10th of *Brumaire* of the year II; and all France adopted the custom, which, without law, became obli-

[1] I find this term used for the first time in a letter of Châteauneuf-Randon's, dated from Feurs on September 15, 1793. The word soon became popular (*muscadin*, dandy, fop, spark, beau).

gatory.[1] Costumes also changed; very many republicans wore the *carmagnole*, the red bonnet, and the straight, lank hair of the orthodox.[2] Robespierre and the Government, however, did not adopt these fashions, which did not become universal.

Republican sentiment soon took the form of religious sentiment. The Republic, once it was Montagnard, became a religion; it had its martyrs and its saints.

We have already seen that Marat, assassinated in July, 1793, whose popularity scarcely reached beyond the walls of Paris, became the personification of the Republic transfixed by foreign powers and the priests. Thereafter the imagination evoked other martyrs to be associated with Marat: Chalier and Le Peletier. The cult of this new trinity was organised by the municipalities and the representatives on mission. It was fundamentally the cult of the fatherland, militant and in danger of death.

The *Sacred Mountain*, from September, 1793, to *Thermidor* of the year II, was the symbol of unitarian patriotism, the religion of the Republic.

## III.

This victorious Mountain, the symbol of political unity, was not so entirely *one* as it professed to be. We may distinguish in it, if not parties, then at least groups: we may distinguish also divergent tendencies and conflicts of ideas and individuals.

Was there at the outset a tendency in the Mountain

[1] See my article on *tutoiement* in the review *La Révolution Français*, xxxiv. p. 418, *et seq.*

[2] The attempt at dechristianisation a little later led to numerous changes of baptismal into Roman or Greek names, and many communes also changed their names when these recalled the Catholic religion or royalty. These philosophic "novelties" were not adopted by the whole country. Although the Republic became democratic, it did not become entirely anti-Christian.

to effect a supplementary social revolution? I am not speaking merely of the "supplement" to the revolution which was effected by the law of July 17, 1793; this law violently despoiled a portion of the property-holders by determining the suppression even of those feudal and other revenues of which the original titles were in existence. But was there a party which desired that property should be differently divided? Were there supporters of the agrarian law?

We have already proved the existence of a socialist[1] movement at the moment of the elections to the National Convention. This movement was solemnly disowned by the Convention, when on September 21, 1792, it decreed the maintenance of properties. On the other hand, at the moment when this decree was passed there was only one preoccupation in France, which excluded all others, that of expelling the Austro-Prussians from Champagne and assuring the national independence. It was when this independence appeared assured by the conquest of the left bank of the Rhine that socialism reappeared.

We cannot say that on this occasion socialism had no other adepts than a few obscure demagogues; it was one of the most famous initiators of the revolution of 1789, and one of the leaders of the old *bourgeois* party, Rabaut Saint-Étienne, an ex-member of the Constituent Assembly, a deputy for Aube in the Convention, who, in the *Chronique de Paris* of January 19 and 21, 1793, demanded a supplement of the social revolution.

"Political equality established," he writes, "the poor soon feel that it is vitiated by the inequality of fortunes; and as equality is independence, they become embittered and indignant against the men upon

[1] We must remember that the words *socialist*, *socialism*, were not yet invented. I employ them for convenience. By *socialism* we shall understand all attempts with a view to a new *social* revolution other than that effected by the Constituent Assembly.

whom they depend by reason of their needs; they demand an equality of fortune; but it is rarely that the rich countenance this aspiration with a good grace. It must therefore be attained by force or by the laws."

By force not equality could be obtained, but another inequality. "It is essential, therefore, to strive to obtain laws, and to require of them two things: Firstly, to effect the more equal partition of properties; secondly, to maintain such partition, and to prevent future inequalities." But as it is impossible to arrive at such a stage suddenly, at one blow as it were, we must first of all have "moral institutions," which will create the taste for sobriety, temperance, and modesty. We must prepare for the manners of equality; Frenchmen must meet and mingle in civic feasts. "True equality is brotherhood." But then we must have laws which will reform the rights of property. "The legislator," says Rabaut, "may still establish precise laws as to the maximum of fortune that a man may possess, beyond which society takes his place and enjoys his right."

This solemn declaration did not pass unperceived. Roederer replied to it in the *Journal de Paris* of January 23rd:

"In these few words, my dear ex-colleague, I see liberty and property violated; but in truth I see something gained on the side of equality. But would it make for equality in abundance, for riches, for general prosperity? No; but for equality in poverty, for equality in famine; for equality in universal ruin."

Rabaut replied, in the *Chronique* of the 27th:

"Man brings into society his goods and his person, in order to submit them to the common protection. Individual properties compose the general property, as the general strength is composed of individual strengths; it is of the sum of these united means and forces that the common protection is composed. But society can only accord its protection inasmuch as it can dispose of the strength and

the goods of each individual; therefore these forces and these goods are at the disposition of society.

About the same time (but whether before or after these articles of Rabaut's appeared I do not know), a popular agitator, to-day forgotten, Varlet, published a "solemn declaration of the rights of man in the social state," of which the following passages have a socialistic character:

"The right of territorial possession has limits in society; its limits must be such that commercial industry and agriculture do not receive any hurt. In all States the indigent form the majority; and as their liberty, their security, and their individual preservation are social goods that come before all others, their most natural wish and their most universal right is to preserve themselves against the oppression of the rich by setting limits to the ambition of acquiring wealth, and destroying by just means the enormous disproportion of fortune. Property being an inviolable right, every owner is entitled to dispose according to his will of his goods and his income, of whatever nature they may be, *so long as the use he makes of them does not tend to the destruction of society*. Property amassed at the expense of the public fortune, by theft, stockjobbing, monopoly, or 'cornering,'[1] becomes national property the moment society acquires, by unquestionable facts, the proof of dishonesty."

These articles of Rabaut Saint-Étienne's did not obtain the support of any of his friends of the Girondist party. As for the statement of Varlet, it is probable that the "demagogue" would not have written it, had there not been here and there in the workshops and factories certain signs of socialistic opinion. But the working men of Paris seem, for the greater part, to hold by the social policy of Hébert, as expressed by him, in December, 1792, in No. 198 of his *Père Duchesne:*

"I do not," he writes, "preach what learned people call the agrarian law. For, according to the calculation of a famous arithmetician, if the soil were equally shared we should each of us have only forty crowns of income; which is by no means the wealth of Peru. It is

[1] To use a modern expression: literally, *forestalling*.—[TRANS.]

impossible to establish perfect equality of fortune; for, supposing that each citizen had a field or garden, a meadow, and a little farm; the man who best knew how to cultivate his land, who had the greatest strength or industry, would soon be richer than his neighbour. I do not, therefore, demand the partition of the soil, but what I do want, damn it, is that we should make all the rich swine who have fattened on the blood of the poor disgorge, that we should make the financiers return the money they have stolen from the nation, and cut the nails of all these leeches who feed on the people, and we shall then have enough to defray the expenses of the war. Peculation will cease, specie will no longer be sold, commerce will go on its way; people will not make enough to ride in carriages, but that is not necessary; a wise man needs only to lay by something for a rainy day, and to provide a crust of bread for his age."

Marat uses almost the same terms; exciting the proletariat against the egoistical rich and the monopolists, without producing any plan of social reform.

On February 23, 1793, there was a popular rising in Paris, caused by scarcity of provisions. The scarcity of bread [1] and the high price of soap [2] led to a riot, and the grocers' shops were pillaged. The people had given ear to the suggestions of Hébert and Marat; and on the evening of the riot a third agitator, more violent even than the other two, the ex-Abbé Jacques Roux, declared before the Commune, of which he was a member: "I think, at the most, the grocers have only made restitution to the people of what they have made the people pay them so long." The rioters of

[1] The most active measures had been taken to provision Paris, and it would be difficult to explain the scarcity of bread, if we did not know, from the *Chronique de Paris* of February 4, 1793, that the municipality of Paris had fixed the price of bread at 12 sous the 4 livres, while the surrounding municipalities had fixed it at 13 sous; which was only natural, as flour was selling at 65 livres the sack. Thus the people of the surrounding districts came to Paris in crowds to lay in provisions, and quickly emptied the bakers' shops.

[2] Soap, which in March was fetching 14 and 16 sous per livre, had risen to 32 sous, and the discontented washerwomen instigated a riot.

February 25th only wished to make the monopolists "overflow," as they said in those days, and none of the accounts of the riot indicate any thought of realising the socialistic ideas of Rabaut and Varlet. However, the rights of property in general seemed to be threatened by this attack upon individual property, and feeling ran high. On March 18th Barère denounced "the declamations against property that certain persons have been permitted to make," and a propaganda in favour of the agrarian law, led, he stated, by the priests and the relations of *émigrés*. He declared that it was time to act with severity; and the following decree, drawn up by the Montagnard Levasseur (of Sarthe), was passed unanimously with enthusiastic applause: "The National Convention decrees the death penalty against whosoever shall propose the agrarian law or any other law subversive of territorial, commercial, or industrial property."

As a result of this decree, the most advanced of the democrats continued, as before, to avoid the expression "agrarian law," which had now become odious; but it did not check the current of socialistic opinion, and the idea of a social reform continued to find public expression. In the same number in which he relates and approves the decree which threatens with death the supporters of the agrarian law, the editor of the *Révolutions de Paris* makes this socialistic declaration: "In order to prevent a too great inequality of riches among republicans, all in a state of equality, it is necessary to impose a maximum on individual fortunes, beyond which a man can acquire no more, even by paying a proportionate tax." At this time many people who gave little thought or none to the accomplishment of a radical reform of society were making use of socialistic expressions; as for instance when the authorities of the department of Paris came to the bar of the Convention on April 18, 1793, on account

of the maximum price of grains which they demanded should be established: "The fruits of the earth, like the air, belong to all men." [1]

It is not enough to say that the decree of March 18th did not check the current of socialistic opinion. On the contrary: a month after this decree socialistic ideals received, or appeared to receive, the implicit and startling support of the man who was then the most popular individual in France: Maximilien Robespierre. We have seen that in April, 1793, he drew up and induced the Jacobins to adopt and submit to the Convention a proposal for a Declaration of Rights, in which he applied to property the equalising principle of the Declaration of 1789. This was only a political manœuvre, in order to appear more democratic than the Girondists, and to render them less popular. These socialistic articles did not figure in the Montagnard Constitution.

Once in power, on the contrary, Robespierre and the Montagnards affected in many instances to oppose all demonstrations pointing to a new "supplement" of the social revolution.

A species of historic illusion has exhibited the Government of Robespierre and the second Committee of Public Safety (from July, 1793, to the 9th of *Thermidor* of the year II), as supported pre-eminently by the Parisian populace. Although it busied itself with feeding the people, in order to prevent riots (in which it succeeded), and although it put into execution the decree of September 9, 1793, which granted forty sous *per diem* to the poor citizens who, in Paris, frequented the sectional assemblies—a decree which made the *sans-culottes* a privileged class in a sense—on the other hand, the Committee applied the laws against working-men's leagues, laws which were really *bourgeois*, with the utmost severity. All attempted strikes

[1] See p. 103.

were sternly repressed. On the 22nd of *Frimaire* in the year II, having to organise factories for the fabrication of arms, the Committee of Public Safety enacted a regulation which was more than severe to prevent the workers taking concerted measures :

"All coalitions (leagues or unions)," it reads, "or assemblies of workmen are forbidden ; such communications between the workmen of different factories as their work may render useful or necessary may only be effected through an intermediary, or by express permission of the administration to which each workshop is subject."

Further on we read :

"In no case may the workmen assemble together in order to make their complaints ; such assemblies as may be formed will be dissipated ; the authors and instigators will be arrested and punished according to the laws."

Practically no one, even during the Terror, dared to preach socialism openly. I see that in June, 1793, a commissioner of the Executive Council, named Franqueville, was arrested at Lisieux for preaching in that city "contempt for property." But from July, 1793, to *Thermidor* of the year II, the correspondence of the deputy-commissioners does not denounce any of these perambulant preachers of socialism, as was the case in September, 1792. In Paris, Jacques Roux, in the journal on which he succeeded Marat, declaimed furiously against bankers, monopolists, stockjobbers, and rich people generally : [1] but he proposed no plan of social revolution. Nevertheless, the Revolutionary Tribunal was soon to silence him, as it did the rest

[1] He writes on August 6, 1793 : "They are re-establishing the aristocracy of riches, which is more terrible than the sceptre of kings." For the rest, this had been a common saying for a long time, which was spoken or written by democrats who were relatively moderate. Thus Thomas Lindet wrote on May 16, 1792 : "The aristocracy of riches is as imperious, as ignorant, as vexatious as that of the nobles" (*Correspondance*).

of the *enragés*, "madmen," as men of such views were called. Neither the Commune of Paris nor the Cordeliers' Club had ever proposed anything resembling the agrarian law. None the less, the socialists appeared to have received indirect encouragement at the Hôtel de Ville and the Salle du Muséum ; the leaders of the Cordeliers and the Commune were guillotined or compelled to hide. The Government was no longer under the influence of the Faubourgs ; it was no longer the people of Paris that governed ; the liberty of free speech was suppressed ; liberty of thought was suppressed, in social as well as in religious and political matters.

It would consequently be useless to search for manifestations, during this period of repression, of such socialistic theories as those that Rabaut Saint-Étienne dared to express at the beginning of 1793. But the sum of all the partial and empirical measures, the opportunist laws, the provisional institutions, which formed the Revolutionary Government, led to a state of things which indirectly prepared men's minds, in this period of tongue-tied socialism, for a new social revolution, which had even attained to a partial accomplishment.

Progressive taxation was one of the measures which effected, if I may use the term, the socialistic education of a certain section of opinion. At first it had been an expedient entirely local and municipal, and peculiar to Paris. On November 24, 1792, the Convention decreed that, among other financial measures designed to reimburse the sum "advanced by the public Treasury to the department and municipality of Paris in order to exchange parchment notes or notes on the Maison de Secours," there should be imposed, for three years, in the departments of taxes on personal property, for all incomes of 900 livres and over, and after the habitation duty, another duty in the form of a progressive impost. On February 7th the municipality

of Paris, in order to assist in the cost of provisioning the city, was authorised to impose a similar duty, and in the same form. In the debate on the subject Cambon went so far as to say: "This system is the wisest, and the most consistent with our principles, for it is by such measures that you will bring about equality, which some men wish us to believe a chimera." On March 18th Barère requested that the Committee of Finances should as quickly as possible present a report on the progressive impost, which he, Barère, "professed to regard as an absolutely equitable institution, although some persons have thought it impossible." During the same session, Ramel, in the name of the Committee of Finances, obtained the passage of this decree:

"The National Convention decrees as a principle that in order to attain to an exacter proportion in the taxes that each citizen must meet in proportion to his means, there shall be a gradual and progressive tax upon luxury and riches, both landed and personal."

The success of the expedient led the Convention to establish it as a principle; and, the principle once proclaimed, it applied it only as a professed expedient; as a provisional tax and a war-tax. The Commune of Paris, on March 9th, and the department of Hérault on April 19th, demanded the establishment of the same tax. The Committee of Finances, through the medium of Ramel, proposed on May 20th to apply to the war-tax the form of a progressive impost. There would be no tax on incomes less than 1,600 livres. Those of 1,600 livres would pay 50 livres; those of 2,600 would pay 110; those of 3,600, 180, and so forth. The municipalities proceeded to levy the tax in less than a week. Cambon then demanded that in order to realise more precisely the views of the department of Hérault, there should be opened "a compulsory civic loan of a milliard, which would be furnished by indifferent and egotistical persons." The discussion that followed was

sufficiently confused ; Barbaroux and a few Girondists seemed to plead the cause of the rich. But Rabaut Saint-Étienne, consistently with himself, declared : "We all agree that it is to the rich we must apply ; no one denies that ; it is the common wish." The debate on ways and means took place on June 9, 21, and 22, 1793. One deputy, Génissieu, wished Paris to be taken as basis. The Committee of Finances objected that "this would to some extent amount to an attack upon property," and this at the moment when the pensioners of Pitt and Coburg were endeavouring to inspire French proprietors with distrust. The Convention unanimously decreed on June 22nd, that :

"In consequence of the declaration made at the commencement of the session, and included in the Constitutional Act which will immediately be presented for the sanction of the sovereign people, tending to the inviolable maintenance of territorial, commercial, and industrial properties, the sum of a milliard forming the compulsory loan decreed on the 20th of last May will not be levied on properties or capitals, but only on all incomes, whether from landed property, personal property, or industry, according to the rules and measures proper to, and worthy of, a free people."

It would therefore be levied on the income alone. But in what proportion? The Committee of Finance, in the person of Réal (of Isère) proposed to divide incomes into three classes : (1) necessary incomes, which would not be called upon to contribute to the loan ; namely 3,000 livres for married men, and 1,500 for unmarried persons ; (2) abundant incomes, which would contribute to the loan in a progressive manner up to the maximum ; (3) above the maximum was superfluity, all of which was required for the loan. "The maximum of abundant incomes is fixed, for the father of a family, at 20,000 livres. The progressive tax reduces this to 12,813 livres. All the surplus is levied for the loan, whatever amount the income may attain." The maxi-

mum income of a bachelor would be 10,000 livres, reduced to 7,000.

The Convention did not adopt this proposal. Jean-bon Saint-André demanded successfully that the loan should only be levied on the truly rich (during the same session, June 22nd):

"Those persons shall not be subjected to the forced loan of a milliard who, being married, enjoy a less net income than 10,000 livres, and those who, being unmarried, enjoy a less income than 6,000 livres; and, a fortnight after the publication of the present decree, every citizen whose income is above the income of the class excepted by the first article will be required to furnish to his section, or his commune when the municipality is composed of several sections, a declaration of his income and his expenses."

But on August 19, 1793, Ramel pointed out that the loan on this basis would yield only two hundred millions. It was therefore necessary to lower the maximum of wealth. The Commission, on the other hand, inquired whether "it was necessary to arrange the progressive tax so that at a given amount the tax would take the whole income, or if a portion of it was always to be left to the taxpayer."

"If it had been a question of a permanent tax, your Commission would not have hesitated to adopt the second method; it would never enter into your considerations, whatever system of progressive taxation you might adopt, to arrange matters so as to fix a limit to the fortunes of our citizens, no matter at what figure; you would not set a limit to the emulation or the industry of citizens; you are making wise laws which, after having left men the enjoyment of the fruits of their labour, will lead to the level of equality, by gentle paths, those fortunes which have risen above it."

But this was a question of a loan only, which, by temporarily depriving the rich, would augment their resources in the future.

Finally, on September 3, 1793, the Convention decreed that citizens should make a declaration of their incomes before a commission appointed by the Council

General of the Commune, which would control and notify matters and inflict penalties. The income fixed, 1,000 livres would be deducted from it in the case of unmarried men, and 1,500 livres in the case of married men, plus 1,000 livres for their wives and 1,000 livres for each of the children or relations in their charge. The remainder of the income would be subjected to the loan in a proportion of which I give two examples: from one of 1,000 livres, a tenth would be taken; from 8,000 to 9,000 livres, nine-tenths. Above 9,000 livres the tax would absorb the entire surplus.

Sometimes applied as an expedient, sometimes as a principle, the progressive tax was not represented merely as a provisional measure, as we see; or rather this provisional measure announced, as Cambon and Ramel admitted, the advent of a system of greater equality. However, the Convention declared that it did not desire a social revolution; it wished to maintain property; and then it applauded the words and adopted the measures which indirectly tended to accomplish such a revolution. By the decree taxing the "rich" it appeared to denounce wealth as "liberticidal"; it proclaimed, we may say, the struggle of the classes; it made for socialism, sometimes intentionally, sometimes without intention.

Do we not find the same characteristics in the measures then taken with a view to the extinction of pauperism? Certainly the mendicity law of October 15, 1793, which ordered the creation of relief workshops and the deportation of beggars who refused to work may be regarded merely as the continuation of the old social policy of the monarchy. But can we say the same of the decree of the 13th of *Ventôse* of the year II, which was passed on a motion of Saint-Just's? This decree enacted that all the communes of the Republic should draw up a list of indigent patriots, and that the Committee of Public Safety would make

a report "on the means of indemnifying all the poor and unfortunate with the goods of the enemies of the Revolution, according to the list which the Committee of General Security has communicated, and which will be made public." In inviting the deputy-commissioners to execute this decree, the Committee of Public Safety wrote to them in the following terms: "Unfortunate poverty must resume the property usurped by crime: the Convention has proclaimed its rights."

On the 22nd of *Floréal*, on receiving a report of Basire's, the Convention decreed that there should be established, in each department, a "register of national beneficence." Aged or infirm agriculturalists could be inscribed therein for an annual pension of 160 livres; aged or infirm artisans, for a pension of 120 livres; mothers and widows burdened with children and living in the country, for a pension of 60 to 85 livres, according to circumstances. Persons inscribed on the register of beneficence would have a right, in cases of illness, to free domicile and assistance.

To take from the rich their superfluity in order to give it to the poor, and so to arrive at a sort of equalisation of fortunes:[1] this was apparently recommended not only from the tribunes but in the laws. The deputy-commissioners put this recommendation into practice, and their measures against wealth, inspired, no doubt, by the necessities of an exceptional situation and the circumstance of war, became impregnated, as will be seen, with a kind of socialism. I willingly admit that the intention of Milhaud and

[1] On the 8th of *Floréal* of the year II the people's club of Castres "decided never to compromise with the true principles and not to accept in its midst any person having a monstrous fortune, unless, recognised as a pure and ardent patriot, he had previously sought by all the means in his power to abolish this inequality."

Ruamps, writing from Wissembourg, on August 22, 1793, was purely military or political.

"It is absolutely necessary," they wrote, "to expel from the bosom of the Republic the wealthy egoists who will neither furnish us with subsistences nor fight with us against the despots: and their property must be confiscated to the profit of the Republic."

But read this letter of Laplanche's, dated from Bourges, October 4, 1793:

"I myself have everywhere taxed the rich and the aristocrats in a revolutionary manner. I have likewise given the order to my delegates to imitate my example, in order to buy subsistences and to help the poor *sans-culottes*. I am proud of this revolutionary measure. Is it not fitting that the egoists, the greedy speculators, the grasping aristocrats who declared war against us should pay the cost? Is it proper that under the reign of equality the nobles, merchants, and priests, the men of the châteaux and the men of parchment, should swim in opulence, while patriots lack everything and have no food, because the rich form monopolies? No, citizens, the Declaration of Rights is not an idle word."

Does not Laplanche speak here as Babeuf spoke later? When Bernard (of Saintes) wrote on October 7th from Montbéliard that he would "blind the rich," was he not speaking as a man having a social revolution in mind?

When, on October 12, 1793, the Convention decreed that the goods of the rich of Lyons should be "destined to indemnify the patriots," we may say that it had no other object than to punish the Lyonnais revolutionaries, and that the measure was purely political. But can we say the same of the resolutions which the deputy-commissioners Albitte, Collot d'Herbois, and Fouché dared to enact when sent to Lyons to put the decree into execution? Here are the four first articles of their resolution of the 24th of *Brumaire*, which did not apply merely to Lyons, but also to the surrounding communes:

"1. All infirm or aged citizens and orphans and indigent persons will be lodged, nourished, and clothed at the expense of the rich of their respective cantons. Signs of poverty will be abolished.

"2. Mendicity and idleness will be equally proscribed; every beggar and idler will be imprisoned.

"3. Able-bodied citizens will be provided with work and the objects necessary for their trade or industry.

"4. To accomplish this the constituted authorities, in concert with the Committees of Supervision, will levy in each commune a revolutionary tax upon the wealthy proportioned to their fortune and their lack of civic worth, until the expenses necessary for the execution of the above act are provided."

This enactment was at least partially executed, since on the 3rd of *Frimaire* following the administration of the department of the Rhône passed a resolution to levy the tax. The same day the Commune of Paris applauded the truly socialistic resolution of the deputies at Lyons, and sent it to the Central Committee of Beneficence "to direct it in its labours." The Commune also adopted and applied to Paris another resolution of the same deputies, of which the 8th and 9th articles were thus conceived:

"As riches and poverty must equally disappear under the system of equality, there will no longer be a bread of fine flour made for the rich and a bread of husks for the poor. All the bakers will be required, on pain of imprisonment, to make one good and single kind of bread, the *bread of equality*."

As far as I know, Albitte, Collot d'Herbois, and Fouché were the only representatives to pass resolutions of so socialistic a character. But the warfare that the others carried on against the rich, although it was not a war on principle, seemed none the less to result, at least provisionally, in a social upheaval in certain districts. Thus Duquesnoy, having learned that in the commune of Lambres (Nord), there had been fires attributed to the malevolence of incendiaries, ordered (on the 22nd of *Pluviôse*) that the victims of

these fires should be indemnified out of the property of the rich. Florent Guiot writes from Lille on the 9th of *Ventôse* that having need of 225,000 livres for the support of patriots who had taken refuge in that city, and for the decoration of the Temple of Reason, he obtained from the auditors of the forced loan a list of the 65 richest citizens (having incomes of from 10,000 to 90,000 livres) and invited them to provide this sum. To feed the proletariat at the expense of the *bourgeois* was a system that many of the deputy-commissioners put into execution, by means of this local taxation of the rich ; taxation which impeded the fulfilment of the forced loan, and disquieted the Convention ; so that the latter prohibited such taxation by the decree of the 18th of *Frimaire* of the year II, and authorised on the following day ; and which the Committee of Public Safety ended by a definite prohibition on the 20th of *Germinal;* but by that time its effects as well as the means employed had almost begun to accomplish, here and there, that "supplement" of the social revolution, that is, socialism.

Do we not also find socialism in the official statement that a time must come when every Frenchman in the Republic would possess a portion of the soil? Two laws proclaim this ideal. The law of June 10, 1793, enacted that the communal property should be divided equally among the inhabitants. When there was no communal property the goods of the *émigrés* were made accessible to the less fortunate citizens by the law of September 13th, in which we read :

"Heads of families who are not proprietors, nor included on the register of taxes, residing in communes where there are no communal lands, will have the opportunity of purchasing the property of *émigrés* to the amount of 500 livres each, payable over twenty years in twenty equal payments, without interest."

On the 22nd of *Floréal* the Committee of Public

Safety recommended to the communes the application of this decree, in order to "make all Frenchmen share in the advantages of the Republican government" in such wise that "no one shall be a stranger on the earth which has seen his birth and that every man shall possess property therein."

Progressive taxation decreed on principle, a loan of a milliard imposed on the rich, compulsory taxes, mendicity laws, laws to the effect that every Frenchman might become a landowner, without speaking of other well-known measures, such as the *maximum:* these are not all the factors of the situation, which was of novel aspect and socialistic in tendency. It must also be noted that the mass of economic difficulties resulting from the war led to the provisional and factitious formation of a social state which was certainly quite other than the legal social state. France had become a vast camp, which had to be provisioned for the war and by warlike means. To begin with Paris had to be fed at all costs, lest the Government should be suddenly swept away by a riot. An army was created to provision Paris; corn was bought above the maximum, to be resold in Paris at the maximum, or often below it. Workmen received 40 sous a day, on the pretext of an indemnity for attendance at the sectional assemblies. The budget of France came to the aid of the budget of Paris, and almost every few days the Committee of Public Safety gave a million to the Commune for food. Certainly this privilege enjoyed by Paris had not a socialistic character. It did, however, by a factitious and provisional measure, place the people of Paris in a situation in which all had the means to live, and where no one or scarcely any one had a superfluity.

Paris was not, was far from being, the only city in which the extraordinary circumstances of the time had created, for a time, an extraordinary social state, in

which a certain portion of socialist doctrine was realised. A scholar who is at work on the political biography of Jeanbon Saint-André, M. Levy-Schneider, has written :

"At Brest, at Toulon [where Jeanbon Saint-André was at work], I find there was, in the years II and III, a progressive socialisation ending in the creation of a veritable collectivist city, where everything was at the service of the State, and all the machinery of which functioned regularly for its profit."

It was not only in the ports and at the seat of war that the formation was at this time effected, either at the compulsion of the representatives or spontaneously, of these collectivist cities. The combined results of the maximum, of short allowances, of various requisitions of men and things, led in a number of cities during this period to a provisional socialisation of goods and of individuals. Even in the country little collectivist cities were formed. Thus in Charente, in *Pluviôse* of the year II, when the deputy Romme had taken measures for taxing the superfluity of wealthy persons, the national agent of the little commune of Challignac addressed this requisition to the mayor and the municipal officers :

"You owe to your constituents all that justice which your functions and your duty impose upon you ; you must make them all enjoy collectively, as each one individually, all the advantages of society ; you must feel that equality in the consumption of subsistences between the working citizens is one of your first duties."

The municipality of Challignac named commissioners "to visit the homes of all the citizens of the said commune and to estimate their consumption, the surplus then to be put in scales, weighed, sealed, and put in requisition to be used the moment required." Those who possessed grain were left the quantity necessary for their support, at the rate of a livre for each worker and half a livre for each non-labouring citizen.[1]

[1] The law of the 6th of *Nivôse* enacted that in all towns besieged,

These are only a few characteristics of the municipal collectivism of the year II, and I leave to some provincial investigator the task of tracing the complete picture of one of the collectivist cities of the Terror. The little that I have said will suffice to show that in these abnormal circumstances collectivism was attempted here and there partially, and up to a certain point, while France was striving to safeguard her national independence.

## IV.

The second Committee of Public Safety and its leader, Robespierre, had to struggle against an opposition on the Right represented by the Dantonists, and one on the Left represented by Hébert, the Commune, and the Cordeliers. The former wished to relax the stress of the Terror now that the armies were victorious ; the latter, on the contrary, wished to increase it, and to profit by the military successes, in order to crush the counter-revolutionists. This was the period (December, 1793) when Hébert's *Père Duchesne* was daily demanding blood, and when the *Vieux Cordelier* of Camille Desmoulins was appealing for clemency. These two parties, the Hébertist and the Dantonist, had no visible limits, no public programme.[1] Danton offered no systematic opposition and we may even ask if he offered any opposition whatever ; but his friends, Philippeaux and Desmoulins (who had ceased, or was about to cease, to be a Robespierrist), did not show the same discretion ; but decried the

blockaded, or surrounded, materials, merchandise, and provisions of all kinds should be put in common. One may say that there was a tendency to apply this law to cities which were not besieged, blockaded, or surrounded.

[1] At the most one can only say that the Hébertists had a policy of dechristianisation.

Committee of Public Safety, whether in reference to the war in Vendée or in respect of the home policy.

This Committee did not, in the matter of the internal policy, present a perfect unity of aim. Collot d'Herbois and Billaud-Varenne were reported in favour of violence ; and the Hébertists affected to humour them. The other members seemed inclined to temporise where the Dantonists and Hébertists were concerned, and to neutralise the one party by means of the other. They felt that the moment was about to come, thanks to the victories of the armies, when it would be necessary somewhat to relax the terrible dictatorship which had been established with a view to unifying the national defence and to restrain internal enemies. Robespierre doubtless shared this sentiment, but he had a personal policy. That clemency which the Dantonists from that time demanded, and for which the majority of the Committee declared a little later, was certainly not repugnant to him ; he saw that France, weary of the Terror, would welcome any Government which should grant it a little more liberty. But he wished to be the one to profit by that welcome ; he would turn that clemency to the advantage of the politico-religious system of which the cult of the Supreme Being was to be the basis, and in which he himself would play the leading part.

To attain his purpose he had first of all to rid himself of the Hébertists, and it was not enough to have checked their campaign of "dechristianisation." Camille Desmoulins heedlessly became a supporter of Robespierre's policy, and in the first two numbers of the *Vieux Cordelier,* the proofs of which had been corrected by Robespierre himself, he threw ridicule on Hébert, Clootz, Chaumette, and Gobel. At the same time Robespierre, before the Jacobins, spoke contemptuously of the imprudent journalist, taunting him with his contradictions and his versatility. Wounded in

his self-esteem, the author of the *Vieux Cordelier* turned against Robespierre, and in his celebrated third number, in which he drew an eloquent picture of the crimes of the Terror, he stabbed the Government with his epigrams, which delighted the enemies of the Revolution. This pamphlet, which had a prodigious success, brought a deputation of disconsolate women to the bar of the Convention (December 20, 1793), who demanded, with loud cries, the liberty of their imprisoned relations. It was decreed that the Committees of General Security and Public Safety should appoint commissions "to look into the means of setting at liberty such patriots as might have been imprisoned." They formed a *Committee of Justice*, a substitute for the *Committee of Clemency* demanded by the *Vieux Cordelier*. Soon it was learned that Toulon had surrendered to the Republic. The movement in favour of a policy of clemency grew so powerful that it seemed to Robespierre that Danton and his friends would profit by it to raise themselves to power. He induced the Convention to revoke the decree establishing a Committee of Justice, and seemed for a moment to be leaning on the Hébertists. Camille Desmoulins was expelled from the Jacobin Club. Fabre d'Églantine was arrested as an accomplice in the embezzlement committed during the liquidation of the Compagnie des Indes, on the 23rd of *Nivôse* of the year II (January 12, 1794). Danton having demanded of the Convention that Fabre should at least be allowed to give an explanation at the bar, Billaud-Varenne launched the following threat: "Woe to him who has sat beside Fabre d'Églantine, and who is still his dupe!" By this time, and in such a manner, were the Dantonists and Hébertists discredited to the profit of Robespierre, to whom Saint-Just, returning from the armies, lent the assistance of his energetic character.

Openly threatened, the Hébertists endeavoured to

effect a *coup d'état*. On the 14th of *Ventôse* of the year II (March 4, 1794) the Cordeliers' Club decided that the engrossment of the Declaration of Rights, which hung in the hall where the club assembled, should be veiled "until the people had recovered its sacred rights by the annihilation of the faction." What faction? Vincent meant the Dantonists; Carrier, those who "calumniated" the guillotine; Hébert, those who wished to save the 75 Girondists arrested by decree on October 3rd preceding; and every one knew that these Girondists were alive only under the protection of Robespierre. He proposed an insurrection, and without passing a formal resolution to that effect, the club welcomed the proposal with enthusiastic applause. It is said that the Cordeliers wished to repeat the doings of June 2nd; to decimate the Convention; to destroy not only the *Indulgents*, but Robespierre himself; to ensure their dictatorship in the departments by means of the Revolutionary Army, and to set Pache at the head of a new Government. But Paris would not follow them; they became afraid; they drew back. This withdrawal would perhaps have saved them, if Paris had not decided against them for the very reason which they had invoked to annex the city to their own profit. The winter had been severe. The civil war having ravaged those departments which sent the largest proportion of provisions to Paris, bread and meat became scarce; the Commune had to put the people on rations of a pound of meat per head every ten days; long queues of people waited at the bakers' shops as in times of siege. The Hébertists thought the people would attribute these misfortunes to the Government. But the people attributed them to the Revolutionary Army, which ravaged all the surrounding country; that is, they attributed it to the Hébertists, who formed the staff of the army. The sections denounced the Revolutionary Army and the Cordeliers to the Convention.

On the night of the 23rd of *Ventôse*, the Committee had Hébert and his friends arrested.

The trial of the Hébertists before the Revolutionary Tribunal commenced on the 1st of *Germinal* (March 21, 1794). They were associated with other prisoners, so as to form one of those odious "amalgamations" which were so often effected. Beside the insurgent Cordeliers, Hébert, Ronsin, Momoro, Vincent, and others, were the free-thinking philosopher Anacharsis Clootz, the aristocrat General Laumur, the accomplices of Dumouriez, a Dutch banker, and finally a sort of police-spy or *agent-provocateur* named Laboureau. The trial, like that of the Girondists, was a mere parody of justice. The indictment spoke of a conspiracy with a view to causing a famine in Paris, and establishing a tyranny, after butchering the Convention. In the course of the trial these accusations were scarcely mentioned again. The witnesses testified merely to the political conduct or the habits of the accused. Hébert was cross-questioned as to bygone unscrupulous actions, and also on passages in his journal which appeared provocative of insurrection. Now at the date when these passages had appeared, Hébert's *Père Duchesne* was not only approved, but actually subsidised by the Government, which bought copies in order to despatch them to the armies.

Vincent and Ronsin were called upon to account for facts quite alien to the indictment. It was the same with Anacharsis Clootz, who was reproached for his ideas of a universal Republic. At the end of four days the jury declared itself sufficiently enlightened; and without hearing any defence they condemned to death all the accused excepting the police-spy, as having desired "to dissolve the national representation, to assassinate its members and the patriots, to destroy the Republican Government, to usurp the sovereignty of

the people, and to give a tyrant to the State." The condemned were guillotined the same day (the 4th of *Germinal* of the year II—March 24, 1794).

The Cordeliers' Club, thus decimated, quickly disappeared. The Revolutionary Army was disbanded. There was no longer an Hébertist party.

On the other hand, the Commune of Paris found itself decapitated. It was not long before the national agent Chaumette suffered the fate of his assistant, Hébert; he was guillotined on the 24th of *Germinal*. Pache, the mayor, escaped the death-sentence; but he was arrested, and replaced by Lescot-Fleuriot, whom the Committee of Public Safety (*Floréal* the 21st) entrusted provisionally with the duties of Mayor of Paris. He was appointed mayor without popular election upon the replacement of Chaumette and Hébert in their posts of national agent and assistant-agent; Payan replaced Chaumette, Moëne replaced Hébert, and a second assistant was arrested on the 8th of *Germinal*. It may be said that the Montagnard Government was thus led not only to crush the dictatorship of the Commune of Paris, against which the Girondists had rebelled prematurely, but also to reduce the Commune to the condition of being but a part of the machinery of the central Government.

Triumphant over its enemies of the Left, the Committee of Public Safety now turned upon its enemies of the Right: the *Indulgents* and the Dantonists. It had already discredited and enfeebled them by arresting Fabre d'Églantine, falsely accused of jobbery, as well as Basire. On the 25th of *Ventôse* (March 15th) Hérault de Séchelles, member of the Committee of Public Safety, in which he represented the diplomatic ideas of Danton, was also arrested on a calumnious accusation of treason.

Robespierre then decided to strike at his rival in popularity, Danton, whom Billaud-Varenne was pur-

suing with furious denunciations. He did not dare himself to denounce his brother-in-arms, the hero of August 10th, the leader of the national defence in 1792. He had him denounced by Saint-Just, to whom he furnished the elements of an odiously lying report. On the 10th of *Germinal* the two Committees of Public Safety and General Security met together, and issued a writ of arrest against Danton, Delacroix, Camille Desmoulins, and Philippeaux, which was signed by all the members present with two or three exceptions. One of these exceptions was Robert Lindet, who cried, it is said, alluding to the duties he fulfilled in the Committee : " I am here to feed citizens, not to kill patriots ! " Doubtless his colleagues thought, with Carnot, that they must ensure at any price, even by a crime, the unity of the Government, and thereby the unity of the national defence ; they were merely the tools of Robespierre's ambition.

On the morrow, at the news of Danton's arrest, there was a moment of stupor in the Convention, which should have ended in a revolt against Robespierre. There were murmurs ; cries of " *Down with the Dictator!* " Legendre demanded that the accused should be heard at the bar. But Robespierre terrified his opponents by an arrogant, threatening speech. The Marsh supported him. Legendre stammered a retractation, and the Convention sent the accused before the Revolutionary Tribunal.

The trial of the Dantonists occupied four sittings of the Court : lasting from the 13th to the 16th of *Germinal* (April 2-5, 1794. The accused, sixteen in number, were divided, by Fouquier-Tinville's indictment, into two categories : firstly, Delacroix, Danton, Desmoulins, Philippeaux, Hérault de Séchelles, and Westermann were accused of having formed " a conspiracy tending to re-establish the monarchy, and to destroy the national representation and the Republican

Government " ; secondly, Fabre d'Eglantine, Delaunay, Chabot, Basire, the Abbé d'Espagnac, the two Freys, Diderichsen, the Spaniard Guzman, and Lulier, were accused of having formed a conspiracy tending " to defame and disparage the national representation, and by corruption to destroy the Republican Government." There should have been two trials, two judgments, as there were two verdicts. But all were taken in one batch ; and by this fresh " amalgam " political prisoners were associated with prisoners in common law, in order that the former might be dishonoured by the latter. Fabre d'Églantine, accused of a forgery of which he was innocent, was unable to obtain the production of the document essential to his defence. It was the same with Hérault, accused of treason. But Danton succeeded in speaking, and his eloquence impressed his hearers. He demanded that the witnesses for the defence should be heard ; and the Revolutionary Tribunal did not know how to refuse him. But then Saint-Just persuaded the Convention that the accused were in open revolt, and it was decreed that the tribunal might " put them out of debate." On the 16th of *Germinal* the jury declared itself sufficiently enlightened ; but it hesitated to bring in a verdict of guilty. It is said that members of the Committee of General Security went to the jury-room in order to influence them ; putting forward political motives and the safety of the Republic. The jury finally decided to declare the accused guilty. The accused protested angrily, and were put " out of debate " ; the sentence of death, pronounced in their absence (on the 16th of *Germinal*), was executed the same day.

## CHAPTER III

### THE RELIGIOUS POLICY BEFORE *THERMIDOR* 9TH

I. Maintenance of the civil constitution of the Clergy. Laws against refractory priests.—II. Dechristianisation. The cult of Reason. —III. The religious policy of the Committee of Public Safety. The persistence of Catholicism.—IV. The cult of the Supreme Being and Robespierre.

### I.

THE Democratic Republic was to have resulted in the separation of Church and State; but this separation was effected only towards the latter end of that form of government.

At the outset, the Convention endeavoured to maintain the existing system ; namely, the civil constitution of the clergy. Not that the idea of separation was new to the men of the time. On November 13, 1792, in the name of the Finance Committee, Cambon had announced to the Convention the approaching presentation of a scheme of general reform, which would permit the suppression of the tax on personal property, and the patent duties, and the reduction by forty millions of francs of the tax on real estate. This was to be effected by the suppression of the expenses of public worship, which, according to Cambon, " cost the Republic one hundred millions." However, the opposition to this proposal was so violent that it was not even presented. The majority at the Jacobin Club seemed persuaded

that the people was not yet sufficiently enlightened to understand such a reform; that it would detach the country districts from the Republic, and arm the whole clergy against the Revolution; in short, there would be a terrible risk of civil war. Cambon was regarded as a shopkeeper economist. Robespierre, in his eighth letter to his constituents, declared the proposal subversive of the morality of the people. There was even a riot in the department of Eure-et-Loire, caused in part by the rumour that the budget of religion was about to be suppressed. On November 30th Danton demanded that the people should be reassured on the matter of religion. The same session the Convention voted the despatch of an address explaining to the citizens "that they had never intended to deprive them of the ministers of religion whom the civil constitution of the clergy had given them." This declaration was repeated on January 11, 1793. On December 10, 1792, a deputy having demanded that ministers of religion should no longer be allowed to qualify as public functionaries, the Convention passed to the order of the day relating to the existence of the law on the subject.[1] On March 23rd a law was passed expressly excepting bishops, curés, and vicars from the law concerning recruitment. On the 27th of the same month the deputy-commissioners Carra and Auguis informed the Vendéeans, in the name of the Convention, that the Republic was founded on the ethics of the Gospels.[2] In Paris, on May 30th, the processions of the *Fête-Dieu* took place freely and without disorder.

Thus the Convention seized every occasion, during the first eight months of its career, to affirm and pub-

[1] The texts relating to Cambon's proposal will be found in my article on Danton in the *Révolution française*, vol. xxv. pp. 146–153.

[2] See, in the *Receuil des actes*, vol. ii. p. 550, the proclamation addressed by these deputies to the inhabitants of Deux-Sèvres and the Vendée.

lish, not merely that it did not desire to destroy the Catholic religion, but that it intended to maintain the system of the Gallican Church incorporated with the State ; that is, the civil constitution.

At the same time it applied and aggravated the laws against refractory or non-juring priests—*Papists*, as they were called.

On August 15, 1792, the Legislative Assembly had decreed " that every French citizen, receiving a salary or pension from the State, would be considered to have renounced it irrevocably," if he had not taken the oath " to be faithful to the nation, and to maintain liberty and equality, or to die in their defence." On the 26th of the same month, considering " that the disturbances caused throughout the kingdom by the non-juring ecclesiastics were one of the chief causes of danger to the country," it decreed that all ecclesiastics who, being liable to the oath prescribed by the law of December 26, 1790, and by that of April 17, 1791, had not taken that oath, or who having taken it had retracted it, would be required to leave France under a penalty of ten years' imprisonment, or, in certain cases, deportation to Guiana. As for ecclesiastics not liable to the said oath, they would be subjected to the same regulations, " when by any previous action they should have occasioned disturbances which had come to the knowledge of the administrative body, or when their removal should be requested by six citizens domiciled in the same department." Infirm and sexagenarian priests were excepted from these regulations ; but such would be assembled in the chief city of the department, in a common dwelling " which the municipality and the police would have the power to inspect."

The participation of " Papist " priests in the Vendéean insurrection led the Convention to complete the laws of the Legislative Assembly as follows :

On March 18, 1793, the Convention decreed the

death penalty against priests who should be compromised in disturbances which had occurred or should occur in the departments on occasions of recruitment. The same day it enacted that all priests who, being subject to transportation, should be arrested on the territory of the Republic, " should be committed at once to the district prison, tried before a military jury, and punished by death within twenty-four hours." On April 23rd it decreed that ecclesiastics who had not taken the oath to maintain liberty and equality should be deported to Guiana without delay. On the 29th and 30th of *Vendémiaire* of the year II a terrible measure was made law. All priests liable to deportation who should be convicted of having been the accomplices of external or internal enemies in bearing arms against the Republic would be put to death within twenty-four hours of the fact being declared as certified by a military commission, and " the fact would stand certified by a written declaration with two signatures attached, or by a single signature confirmed by the deposition of a witness, or by the oral and identical depositions of two witnesses." As for priests who, being liable to deportation, should have returned, it would suffice, in order that they might suffer the penalty provided by the law of March 18th, that two witnesses should uniformly depose that they were liable to deportation. Finally the same law not only punished by deportation the ecclesiastical functionaries who had not taken the oath exacted by the decree of November 27, 1790, and ecclesiastics who were not office-holders who had not taken the oath to maintain liberty and equality, but it also ordered the deportation (with the exception of the aged and the infirm) of all ecclesiastics who had taken the oath and who had been denounced for uncivic conduct by six citizens of the canton, after this denunciation had been considered " by the directorate of the department upon notification by the district."

It will be remarked that this law placed all priests in a state of legal suspicion, whether non-jurors or otherwise, whether office-holders or otherwise. This fact indicates a remarkable change in the attitude of the Convention towards the constitutional Church. And whence arose this change? Firstly, from the fact that the constitutional Church had not been a success, had not fulfilled the purpose for which it was instituted, since it had not become the national Church. Unpopular, it made no progress. Experience had proved that the Church was not a force on which the Republic could rely. Experience had also proved that the Montagnard Republic could not rely on the constitutional Church, so many of whose ministers had espoused the cause of the Girondists and Federalists. The entire constitutional clergy seemed hostile to the unitarian policy of the Mountain; the entire constitutional clergy had become, in the eyes of the *sans-culottes*, the enemy; and the people had certainly discovered that the constitutional clergy were no better than the others; that the Girondist "jurors" were as dangerous to the Republic as the non-jurors who were the accomplices of kings and *émigrés*.

Yesterday one contrasted the good priests with the bad; to-day one sees that there are not, or are no longer, any good priests. The Catholic religion is discredited in the eyes of militant patriots. If religion is an obstacle to the national defence, why, let religion be abolished! That is the idea which has spread here, there, and everywhere; not through philosophy, but by the anxiety of exasperated patriotism.

The sanctuary also has lost its prestige since the people violated it in order to execute the decrees of the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies (of September 29, 1789, September 10, 11, and 12, 1792), which sent to the mint all church plate which was not essential to the celebration of the services; and also to

execute the decree of the Convention (of July 22, 1793), which ordered that the bells should be smelted for the founding of cannon, leaving only one in each parish.

## II.

The initiative of the "dechristianising" movement came from the country, under the auspices of a few deputy-commissioners. Thus on October 1, 1793, André Dumont wrote from Abbeville that he had declared before the people that the priests "were harlequins or pierrots dressed in black; marionette showmen; who performed nothing but puerilities to swindle people out of their money." At Nevers, about the same time, the deputy-commissioner Fouché went considerably farther. In a proclamation of September 26th he professed himself (falsely) to be instructed by the Convention "to substitute for the hypocritical and superstitious worship to which the people still unhappily cling, that of the Republic and of natural ethics." On October 10th he published an enactment affecting the cemeteries; not content with "laïcising" them, he ordered that these words should be inscribed at the gates: *Death is an eternal sleep.* Chaumette, who met Fouché at Nevers, where doubtless they put their heads together, obtained the approval in principle of this enactment by the Commune of Paris, on October 16th. At Rochefort, Laignelot transformed the parish church into a Temple of Truth, to which eight Catholic priests and a Protestant minister proceeded with great ceremony on October 31st in order to unfrock themselves.

Without going so far as acts of "dechristianisation," the Convention had some time ago assumed a "philosophic" attitude which undoubtedly awakened much slumbering audacity. The festival of August 10, 1793, was the first of all the national festivals of

which we may say that its character was purely secular. Hérault de Séchelles, who presided over it, appears to have deified Nature, whose statue was honoured by libations. On October 2, 1793, the Convention decreed that the ashes of Descartes should be transferred to the Panthéon ; Marie-Joseph Chénier having communicated a report, in which he said : "Had Descartes merely replaced by fresh errors the errors of antiquity, he would still have greatly benefited the public, by insensibly accustoming men to examine, not to believe."

The establishment of the Republican era, the substitution of the Republican for the Gregorian calendar (by the decrees of October 5, 1793, and the 4th of *Frimaire* of the year II), show what a change had been accomplished, or was preparing itself in men's minds. That this measure was inspired by an anti-religious policy is plainly evident in the reports of Fabre d'Églantine and Romme, so full were they of philosophic abuse of dogma. To replace the old dates and festivals by new ; to change the names of the saints for the names "of the objects which compose the true wealth of the nation" ; this was to wrest from Catholicism her ornaments and her honour, to expel her violently from the nation's life.

On the 15th of *Brumaire* of the year II the Convention adopted and ordered the impression of a speech in which Marie-Joseph Chénier proposed to replace Catholicism by the religion of the *Patrie:*

"Snatch the sons of the Republic from the yoke of theocracy which is still heavy upon them. . . . Free of prejudices, and worthy to represent the French nation, yours be it to found, on the shards of dethroned superstitions, the only universal religion, which has neither secret nor mysteries, whose one dogma is equality, whose sermons are our laws, whose pontiffs our magistrates, and which asks the human family to burn its incense only before the Altar of the Country, our common mother and divinity."

These were bold words ; so far they were only words.

The people set the example of action; not in Paris, but in a rural district of old France.[1] The people of Ris-Orangis acknowledged Saint-Blaise as their patron; but a young volunteer having spoken to them concerning Brutus, they replaced Saint-Blaise by the Roman, and gave the name of Brutus to their commune. This example was followed by neighbouring communes, and on the 10th of *Brumaire* of the year II the administrators of the district of Corbeil declared before the Convention "that the majority of their fellow-citizens no longer knew . . . any religion but that of liberty." On the 16th of *Brumaire* the inhabitants of Mennecy (in the same district of Corbeil) appeared at the bar, wearing copes in a spirit of mockery, and declared that they had abjured superstition and would put up with no more curés. During the same session the Committee of Public Safety, through the medium of Barère, induced the Convention to ratify the right of the communes to suppress the parish church; it being understood that in the last resort the departments should decide the matter.

The anti-Catholic movement had by this time reached such a stage in Paris that Bishop Gobel decided, with eleven of his vicars, to resign his duties. He appeared at the bar on the 17th of *Brumaire*, solemnly announced his resignation and that of his vicars, and laid aside his crucifix and his ring, and set the red bonnet on his head. There was a scene of enthusiasm. "Every one," says the *Journal des débats*, "hastened to clasp in his arms the men who, weary of being divided between their religion and their country, would henceforth devote themselves entirely to their country." The ecclesiastical members of the Convention followed suit, at this and following sessions, excepting a small number,

[1] The old French kingdom, which covered only a small part of modern France.—[TRANS.]

of whom was Grégoire. After these striking examples there were very many resignations of curés and vicars throughout all France.

On the 20th of *Brumaire* of the year II there was a Festival of Liberty at Notre Dame, at which the department and the Commune were present with a great gathering of people; and this festival was definitely anti-Christian in character. An actress from the Opera personified Liberty. The "Torch of Truth" was seen to burn on the "Altar of Reason." Then the department and the Commune repaired to the bar of the Convention. Chaumette declared that the people wanted no more priests; no other gods than those whom Nature offers us. "We, the people's magistrates, have verified its decision; we bring it you from the Temple of Reason." And Chaumette demanded that the Church of Notre Dame should thenceforth bear the name of the Temple of Reason. A decree to that effect was immediately passed. The actress who figured as Liberty stood at the desk and received the embraces of the President, Laloy, and the secretaries. Then the Convention proceeded to Notre Dame, where the ceremony was recommenced in its honour.

On the morrow, the 21st, the Convention received a petition from the Central Committee of the People's Clubs, approved by the Commune and the sections, demanding the suppression of the stipends of the clergy. "Let those who still have faith in the augurs pay them; but why subject to this shameful tribute a republican who has no other god than virtue and his country?" The Convention gave the petition an honourable reception; but did not consider it an opportune occasion for placing the question of the separation of Church and State on the orders of the day.

The "dechristianising" movement quickly became general in Paris. Nearly all the sections renounced

religion, closed their parish churches, and re-opened them as Temples of Reason.

At the outset the Convention seemed to favour this movement. On the 25th of *Brumaire* it decreed "that the presbyteries and parish churches situated in the communes which shall have renounced public worship, or their revenues, shall be destined to be of service in the relief of suffering humanity and public education." It welcomed with benevolence the unfrocking of priests and the anti-religious masquerades which swarmed past the bar. At the session of the 30th of *Brumaire* it compromised itself still farther, when it admitted a deputation from the section of Unity, grotesquely decked out in sacerdotal habits, and allowed a theatrical parody of the Catholic religion to defile through the hall. The spokesman of the deputation having sworn to have no other religion than that of Reason, Liberty, Equality, and the Republic, the people and the deputies, according to the *procès-verbal*, cried out, "We swear it! Long live the Republic!"

The Commune of Paris ventured then to jump off the fence, to use a vulgarism. On the 3rd of *Frimaire* of the year II (November 24, 1793), upon the application of Chaumette, it passed the following resolution:

"Whereas the people of Paris has declared that it will recognise no other religion than that of Truth and Reason, the Council General of the Commune orders:

"1. That all churches and temples of whatever religion or sect has existed in Paris shall immediately be closed.

"2. That all priests and ministers of whatever religion shall be held personally and individually responsible for all disturbances of which the cause shall proceed from religious opinions.

"3. That whosoever shall demand that either church or temple shall be opened shall be arrested as a suspect.

"4. That the Revolutionary Committees shall be invited to keep a close watch upon all priests.

"5. That the Convention shall be petitioned to issue a decree which shall exclude priests from the exercise of public functions of whatever kind, and from all employment in the national manufactories."

The "cult of Reason," organised in Paris by the sections, spread through the provinces also, under the auspices of the people's clubs and the deputy-commissioners. Many of the churches were closed, then converted into Temples of Reason; there were "Goddesses of Reason" and anti-Catholic processions. Nearly all the cities appeared to rally to the new worship. In the south-west especially, under the auspices of Dartigoeyte and Cavaignac, the process of dechristianisation was so violent as to cause scandal.

Taken on the whole, this movement, which was almost universally Deistic, not materialistic nor atheistic, seems to have been, in Paris, cheerful and superficial so long as the people took part in it; but pedantic and sterile when embraced by a few men of letters only. The provinces took the matter more seriously. In the departments, and especially in the cities, there were serious and sincere attempts to abolish the ancient religion and to establish a rationalistic worship. The Goddesses of Reason were not actresses, as in Paris, but in almost every case, and this the most hostile witnesses do not deny, beautiful and virtuous young girls, belonging to the upper middle classes.

This cult was eagerly adopted in those critical hours of the national defence (at the end of 1793) by the generality of active patriots, by the Jacobins, by the members of the revolutionary committees, by the municipal officers; in short, by the whole militant Revolution.

One must not look to find a different aspect, a different spirit, among the worshippers of Reason, accordingly as they were, for example, Bretons or Provençals. If the festivals of Reason were not everywhere celebrated in the same manner; if the zeal for "dechristianisation" was more violent in Strasburg, for instance, and Auch, than in Chartres or Limoges, it was because from the height of the Strasburg steeple men

could see the Austrian outposts ; because at Auch the Revolution was threatened by the machinations of the clergy ; while at Chartres the enemy was far away, and at Limoges the Revolution had no dangerous adversaries.

The cult of Reason was less a change of the religious conscience of the French than an expedient of patriotic defence against the Catholic clergy. Little by little it became transformed into the worship of the *Patrie*. The busts of the philosophers in the temples were soon replaced or eclipsed by those of Marat, Chalier, and Le Peletier, who were the personifications, in the popular mind, not of the doctrines of the new cult, but of revolutionary France attacked by reaction. Men finally turned away from the cold image of Reason, to honour above all the trinity of the bleeding martyrs of patriotism.

## III.

What, in these circumstances, was the policy of the Government? We may sum it up in a word : it opposed, as far as it could, the violent attempts to destroy the Catholic religion, and sought, in the midst of the tempest, to maintain the liberty of worship.

Not that the members of the Committee of Public Safety desired, as believers, to maintain the Catholic religion. Everything leads us, on the contrary, to believe that they expected and hoped that little by little, as enlightenment progressed, the Catholic religion would disappear. But they wished to avoid all violent persecution ; firstly, lest internal discord should weaken the nation's power of defence ; secondly, lest Europe should be too deeply scandalised, and so become unmanageable and intractable.

As early as October 27, 1793, the Committee cen-

sured the anti-religious violence of André Dumont in the following terms :

"The counter-revolutionaries must be given no occasion for declaring that religious liberty is being violated and that war is being made upon religion as religion. It is necessary to punish seditious and uncitizenlike priests, but not openly to proscribe the very name of priest."

On the 1st of *Frimaire* of the year II (November 21, 1793) the man whom France and Europe regarded as the real head of the Government, Robespierre, solemnly protested, from the tribune of the Jacobins, against this violence.

"People have thought," he said, "that in welcoming civic offerings the Convention had proscribed the Catholic religion. No, the Convention has taken no such rash measure; the Convention will never do so. Its intention is to maintain religious liberty, as it has proclaimed, and at the same time to repress all those who abuse that liberty for the purpose of disturbing the public order; it will not permit the persecution of peaceful ministers of religion, and will punish them with severity as often as they dare to avail themselves of their privileges in order to deceive the citizens and to arm the prejudiced, and monarchism, against the Republic. The priests have been denounced for saying Mass; if they are prevented from saying it, they will say it all the longer. He who tries to prevent them is a greater fanatic than they who say the Mass. There are men who would willingly go farther; who, under the pretext of destroying superstition, would make a kind of religion of atheism itself. Every philosopher, every individual can adopt what opinions of atheism he pleases. Whosoever would make a crime of it is a fool; but the public man, the legislator, who should adopt such a system would be a hundred times more a fool. The National Convention abhors it. The Convention is not a maker of books, an author of metaphysical systems; it is a popular political body entrusted with making not only the rights, but the character of the French people respected. It was not in vain that it proclaimed the Declaration of the Rights of Man in the presence of the Supreme Being. It will perhaps be said that I am narrow; a man of prejudices; perhaps a fanatic. I have already said that I speak not as an individual nor as a systematic philosopher, but as a representative of the people. Atheism is aristocratic. The idea of a great Being who watches over oppressed innocence and who punishes crime triumphant is essentially of the people. (*Loud applause.*)

The people, the unfortunate, applaud me. Were I to meet with censure it would be from the rich or the guilty. Since I left college I have been a very poor Catholic; I have never been disloyal in my defence of humanity. I have only been more attached to the moral and political ideas I have just expounded. *If God did not exist we should have to invent Him.*"

To Robespierre, the dechristianisers were traitors, foreign agents :

"Do you not see the snare set for you by the enemies of the Republic and the treacherous emissaries of the foreign tyrant? By presenting as the general opinion the caprices of a few individuals and their own extravagance, they wish to make us odious in the eyes of all other nations, in order to consolidate the tottering thrones of the scoundrels who oppress them. What season have they chosen for these machinations? The time when their combined armies have been defeated or repulsed by the Republican genius; the time when they wish to stifle the murmuring of the nations wearied of or indignant at their tyranny; when they are pressing the neutral nations, or those allied to France, to declare themselves against you. The traitors wish for nothing better than to realise all the abominable calumnies of which all Europe recognises the impudence, and to alienate from you, by means of prejudice or by religious opinions, those whom common interests and a common morality were winning over to the sublime cause we are defending."

To-day, when we know the ultimate consequences of this speech, we regard it as a prelude to the Robespierrist cult of the Supreme Being. Contemporaries saw in it nothing but wise political counsel; and the governmental quality of the phrases gave them food for reflection, above all when they saw that in this serious matter Robespierre was in agreement with Danton. The latter, speaking in the Convention on the 6th of *Frimaire*, used almost the same words :

"I ask," he said, "that there shall be no more anti-religious masquerades in the heart of the Convention itself. Let such as wish to lay the spoils of the Church upon the Altar of the Country no longer make a game of it, nor deliver them as trophies. . . . There is a limit to

everything; even to congratulations. I request you to draw that limit." [1]

But the limit was not immediately drawn. During the whole month of *Frimaire* the Convention continued to welcome at its bar the "dechristianisers," and to grant honourable mention to letters announcing, in the style of Hébert, the abdication of priests, the wanton destruction of sacred objects, and even the inauguration of Temples of Reason. Couthon himself, the Robespierrist Couthon, brought relics to the tribune, and derided them. On the 10th of *Frimaire* the Convention was represented at the Festival of Reason at Saint-Roche by a deputation, when the actor Monvel made an anti-Christian speech, and the deputation presented an enthusiastic report.

But on the 15th of *Frimaire* Robespierre obtained the adoption by the Convention of a "Reply to the Manifestoes of the Kings leagued against the Republic," in which the peoples of Europe were addressed as follows:

"Your masters tell you that the French nation has proscribed all religions; that it has replaced the worship of Divinity by the worship of a few men. They depict us in your eyes as an insane or idolatrous

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[1] *Moniteur*, reprint, xviii. 525. Danton was none the less convinced that it was wise to superimpose on the mystical religions the religion of patriotism, which would be common to all Frenchmen. At the same session, according to the *Républicain français* and the *Journal des débats*, he demanded the erection of a temple "where the envoys of all the departments would assemble at the more important commemorations of liberty, on the sites which were its cradle." According to the *Moniteur* he proposed, in the same speech, the cult of the Supreme Being, of which Robespierre had not dared to speak to the Jacobins. These are the words attributed to Danton: "The people will have festivals at which they will offer incense to the Supreme Being, to the Lord of Nature; for we do not wish to destroy superstition merely to establish the reign of atheism." Did he really utter these ultra-Robespierrist words? We do not know; he did not write his speeches; the journals reported them as they pleased and Danton never corrected them.

people. They lie. The French people and its representatives respect the liberty of all religions and proscribe none. They honour the virtue of the martyrs of humanity, without infatuation and without idolatry: they abhor intolerance and superstition, under whatever pretext they hide themselves: they condemn the extravagances of philosophy equally with the follies of superstition and the crimes of fanaticism."

At the same session the Committee of Public Safety presented, through Barère, a proposal for a decree which would ratify the liberty of worship (and thus prevent the destruction of the Catholic religion). Seconded by Robespierre and by Cambon, this proposal was adopted on the 16th of *Frimaire;* then, on the 18th, the addition of a phrase was made, so that the decree should not condemn the anti-religious measures of the deputy-commissioners. The text of the decree was as follows:

"The National Convention, considering the demands made upon it by the principles which it has proclaimed in the name of the French people and the maintenance of public tranquillity, decrees: Firstly, all violent measures and all measures contrary to the liberty of worship are prohibited. Secondly, the supervision of the constituted authorities and the action of the public authorities will be confined in this respect to that which concerns each department in matters of police regulations and measures of public security. Thirdly, the Convention, by the above dispositions, does not in any manner intend to lessen the force of the laws and the precautions for the public welfare against refractory or turbulent priests, or against all such as shall attempt to abuse religion as a cover for compromising the cause of liberty; neither does it intend to censure what has hitherto been done by the orders of the deputy-commissioners, nor furnish any one with a pretext for alarming patriotism or abating the mainspring of the public spirit. The National Convention invites all good citizens, in the name of France, to abstain from all disputes of a theological nature, or such as are irrelevant to the interests of the French nation, and to assist by all possible means in the triumph of the Republic and the ruin of all its enemies."

Doubtless it would have been logical to have revoked such orders of the deputy-commissioners as were found

to be contrary to the principle of religious liberty. But the Convention was unwilling to discredit these agents of the central power in the eyes of the people, hoping that they themselves would revoke their "de-christianising" measures.

The correspondence of the Committee of Public Safety shows that it took this decree very seriously indeed, and did all that was possible to ensure that the deputy-commissioners should conform to it.

Thus Ingrand, entrusted with the general levy in the department of Indre, Creuse, and Vienne, complained that he could not, in the district of Montmorillon, "induce any priest to renounce his priesthood and his religious fooleries." The Committee replied, on the 19th of *Frimaire* of the year II :

"Leave religious ideas to fade out and disappear of themselves. From persecution those horrible wars called sacred wars arise. By forcing us to seize the weapon of philosophy at an unseasonable time, our enemies have sought to make it the objective of a mortal combat. Traitors, by invoking intolerance in our midst, have tried to clothe liberty in a Nessus' shirt."

Lanot and Brival, deputy-commissioners at Tulle, were reported intolerant. The Committee wrote to them on the 26th of *Frimaire:*

"We are informed, dear colleagues, by the commissaries of the department of Corrèze and the deputies of that department, that gatherings of fanatics have occurred there, or rather of citizens led astray by scoundrels who make a pretext of religious motives. You know, dear colleagues, what are our principles in this respect, and we invite you to propagate them ; they are to enlighten, but never to embitter ; to persuade, never to force. Let every man believe what he pleases ; provided that his conduct or his errors do not trouble the public order. We shall not inquire whether or not disturbances are caused by a religious principle ; we only desire the peace and unity of our citizens. In a word, we shall consider the counter-revolutionary disturbances which some are trying to excite, only as matters for the police, which you must baffle by wise and firm measures. Our attention has also been called to the anxiety caused

by the supposed suppression of the stipends of the priests. It is for you, dear colleagues, to teach the alarmed and doubting citizens that the Convention has made no declaration on this subject, that the stipends are therefore provisionally continued, and that it is the nation, not the communes, which continues to bear the expense of them."[1]

Finally, in a circular to the representatives signed by Billaud-Varenne and Collot d'Herbois, on the 4th of *Nivôse*, the Committee expressed, in terms less simple, but still very lucid, the same policy :

"Doubtless the triumph of truth over deceit is certain ; let us hasten it, but not precipitate it, however painful it may be to be still fighting opinions which common sense ought to have swept away with the ruins of the throne. Since the interest of the country demands it, let policy march hand in hand with might ; reason was its first ray of light, and must not be lost. In matters of religious opinions violence embitters without convincing. Few men, in the rapid passage from slavery to liberty, have entirely rid themselves of the yoke of the prejudices with which they were inoculated in childhood. Fanaticism seizes upon them in the cradle ; it fashions their very organs ; but it has been powerless to destroy a desire more ancient than itself in the heart of an honest man : the desire to learn. Men who are plunged in the error of good faith are easily known ; they absorb the light so eagerly when it is tempered to their weakness. Entrusted with the honourable mission which the ancients attributed to their beneficent gods, you will accomplish it with zeal. March, torch in hand, giving light to those still blind with ancient prejudice ; with the sword in the other hand, smite the villains who preach heaven only the better to devour the earth. Tolerant to the first, be terrible to the conspirators."

Those of the members of the Committee of Public Safety who departed "on mission" put these counsels into practice. Thus Jeanbon Saint-André, at Cherbourg, by an order of the 21st of *Frimaire* ensured the free exercise of religious worship, on condition that it was confined to places of worship. In a proclamation adjoined to this order, he said :

[1] This letter is signed Carnot, Billaud-Varenne, L. A. Prieur, and R. Lindet.

"The National Convention . . . in no wise limits your opinions, nor questions your conscience; and the first of the laws which it has passed in the name of the people of which it is the mouthpiece definitely recognises the liberty of all forms of worship. Follow without fear, therefore, such practices as seem good to you. Serve the author of Nature after your manner. Jews, Christians, Mahometans, disciples of Confucius or adorers of the Grand Lama, you are all equal in the eyes of a free people."

What was essential was that there should be no dominant cult.[1]

Not all the deputy-commissioners conformed to the instructions of the Committee of Public Safety; we find that some continued the Hébertist campaign even after the issue of the decrees of the 16th and 18th of *Frimaire;* for instance, Lanot, Guimberteau, Le Carpentier, and Lequinio. But many became more moderate. Dartigoeyte, who had been one of the promoters of the cult of Reason in part of the south-east, wrote from Auch, on the 23rd of *Frimaire*, to the Committee of Public Safety:

"The sacerdotal revolution has been pushed a little too far by false patriots and unreflecting zealots. . . . In some districts men's consciences have been forced. The religious ideas of weak-minded men have been treated as a crime; the clubs have even abjured religion, and required that each member should abjure it solemnly under penalty of exclusion. You, citizen colleagues, are aware of the imprudence of these measures."

Laignelot himself, who was in agreement with Lequinio in the matter of abolishing Catholicism in

[1] In his goodwill towards the "pontiffs of all the religions," Jeanbon Saint-André went so far as to say, in the same proclamation: "Dare to be, with us, the teachers of the human species, the terror of vice, the scourge of prejudices. On the field where we admit you to fight at our side, glory awaits you; and if you have to make sacrifices the nation will reward you, and the knowledge of the good you will have done will be its own best recompense. Are you not, as we are, flattered at the touching spectacle of the human race set free, and by your striving?"

Rochefort, now found that Lequinio was not "prudent with fanaticism," and he denounced him for that reason to the Committee of Public Safety.

In October and November, 1793, it was thought necessary to overthrow the altars in order to destroy all faith in the priests who were fomenting a civil war; but now that very attempt, so unwelcome was it to the country populations, was in danger of provoking a new civil war. Political and patriotic reasons had inspired the dechristianising movement; political and patriotic motives induced many of the promoters of this movement to abandon it.

As early as the middle of November, at Courtalin in Seine-et-Marne, close to the district responsible for the first instance of "dechristianisation," the peasants had taken to arms, and were demanding that the churches should be re-opened; while the deputy-commissioner Godefroy advised the Committee of Public Safety to grant their request. At Jouy-sur-Morin, in the same department, a hundred men armed with muskets, pikes, forks, and scythes threatened the deputy Morisson (*Frimaire* the 24th), telling him "that they wanted the Catholic religion, and would have no more Jacobins." At Villequiers (Cher) there was a serious riot directed against the "dechristianisers." The national agents were forced to ring the bells and to drink holy water. The headquarters of the Jacobin club were destroyed, and the people threatened to destroy them again should the "nation" rebuild them. "We want our religion!" they cried. "We will all die to defend it! We want everything as it was, and then we will march willingly."

These angry protests were not general; but they were numerous. If they were not general it was because the people had not everywhere sufficient daring, and because the churches had only been closed in certain districts by the end of 1793.

Two letters from Roux-Fazillac, dated the 27th of *Frimaire* and the 7th of *Nivôse*, teach us that the exercise of the Catholic religion was not interrupted in Dordogne even at the height of the anti-Christian movement. We see from a letter of Lefiot's that in the departments of Loiret, Loir-et-Cher, and some of the surrounding departments, not only were the churches open at this time, but the bells were rung freely. From a report by Vernerey we learn that in *Messidor* of the year II the same conditions were still obtaining in the department of Allier.

These differences of treatment were denounced to the Committee of Public Safety and to the deputy-commissioners as instances of shocking injustice, and in many districts the Catholics obtained permission, at least for a time, to reopen their churches. Thus on the 27th of *Frimaire*, Delacroix (of Eure-et-Loir), Louchet, and Legendre, deputy-commissioners in Seine-Inférieure, invited the Committee of Supervision of Rouen to reopen all the churches of that city. In Marne, Massieu allowed the churches to be reopened "almost everywhere." On the 21st of *Nivôse* the deputy Blutel, on leave in Calvados, wrote to the Convention that the *Te Deum* had been chanted at a civic festival at Magny-le-Freule, and he himself went to church with "these good folk," in order not to "censure their opinions by a refusal."

But the application of the decree of the 16th and 18th of *Frimaire* was thwarted and impeded, according to the district and the circumstances, by the fact that many of the ecclesiastics profited by it in order to set up an opposition against the Republic, and in many places the deputy-commissioners had to testify that the congregations were political as much as religious. Wherever there was a secret or open resistance to the establishment of the Republican Government, wherever the recruiting laws were ill executed, where-

ever the success of the national defence seemed compromised by malevolence or apathy; in all conspiracies, in all counter-revolutionary intrigues, the deputy-representatives, if they pursued their inquiries to the bitter end, found there the hand of a priest. Incessantly the Revolutionary Committees and the people's clubs denounced them, with proofs confirming the dangers, in a time of civil and foreign wars, of that religious liberty which served as a mask and a means to the undertakings of the counter-revolutionaries. There was such an outburst of anxiety among the *sans-culottes*, the militant patriots, that many deputy-commissioners allowed the decree concerning the liberty of religious beliefs to be violated; or they even violated it themselves. When Robespierre's cult of the Supreme Being was organised (from the 18th of *Floréal* to the 20th of *Prairial*), although this cult appeared half Christian, and although it was notorious that Robespierre was protecting the Catholics, it was then that the dechristianising movement reached its height, and then that the greatest numbers of churches were closed.

The better to understand how it came to pass in so many departments that the establishment of the worship of the Supreme Being was at the same time the destruction of Catholicism, we must read, among others, the order "relating to the annihilation of fanaticism, the celebration of the decadal feasts, and the regeneration of the public mind," which was issued at Dax, on the 5th of *Prairial*, not by an exalted Montagnard, but by a moderate; Monestier, from Lozère.

This order related to the two departments of Lot-et-Garonne and Lourdes. The deputy first of all recalls that in an order of the 27th of *Pluviôse* he had instructed the people's clubs and the public officials to deliver speeches, on the decadal festivals, "in the temples raised to the worship of Reason." By an order

of the 25th of *Germinal* he had ordered the confinement of such former priests and ministers as were fanatical or the cause of disturbance, and "the assemblage in the chief towns of the districts of all those whose presence might be dangerous in the communes." The present order completes those preceding it. These are its principal points: "In every commune there will be a temple to the Supreme Being, and if in some communes none exists as yet, the municipalities will be required to open forthwith, and set aside to that end, one of the former churches." "The inscription *Temple of Reason* will be replaced by the inscription: *Temple of the Supreme Being*." All "good citizens" will be required to attend the festival of *Prairial* the 20th. All those who fail to attend "are recommended to the solicitude of the Committees of Supervision and the municipalities." "Conformably with the order of the representative of the people of the 25th of *Germinal*, those who celebrate the ancient Sunday by their idleness, by promenades, by an affected garb, or by any other external conduct, will be deprived on that day of the ration of bread which they have not earned in their idleness. In default of this privation they will be subjected by the Committees of Supervision or the municipalities to pay a fine proportionate to their means, which will not be less than 100 sols each time, and which will be applicable to the poor. They will also be posted, as fanatics and disobedient to the law, on a list affixed to the outer door of the municipal building or the Temple of the Supreme Being." "All monuments, movable goods and other effects tending to fanaticism, which may still exist in the former churches" will be without delay handed over to the districts. What can be sold will be sold; the rest will be burned. The expenses relating to the establishment of temples "will be defrayed by the rich, by aristocrats, fanatics, and egoists, by those who

were indifferent or moderate during the Revolution, and by intriguers." The taxes will be raised by the Councils General of the Communes or by the Committees of Supervision.[1]

In the Lourdes and Lot-et-Garonne, there was thus introduced a new religion, which, in the process of organisation, and by proclaiming itself as exclusive, indirectly suppressed the old religion. Elsewhere this old religion was directly abolished by an order of the deputy-commissioner. Thus the deputy Siblot writes from Pont-Audemer, on the 10th of *Floréal:*

"A large number of priests, in the two departments of Seine-Inférieure and Eure, had resigned their functions; there remained a certain number saying Mass in a good many communes. Fanatics followed them in flocks. The public security was threatened by these gatherings; already individual misadventures had resulted from them. By my order of *Germinal* 18th I put an end to this. No more Masses are said in these two departments, and the people, far from complaining, applaud the measure, being convinced that it ensures their tranquillity."

Elsewhere again the communes were persuaded by Jacobin orators to close their churches; for example, in Allier.

"At the time of my arrival in this department," writes Vernerey, "the Roman Catholic religion was still practised publicly in almost all the communes. Apostles of truth and reason were sent among them; they spoke to the people with prudence and wisdom, and before I left the department not a church remained open. Fanaticism had expired without a convulsion."

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[1] In the meantime, Monestier himself imposed the taxes in the communes of Dax (9,000 livres), Habas (4,400), Montfort (8,000), Pouillon (5,000). And he also personally drew up the list of the taxes in these four communes. For example: "In the commune of Dax those hereafter named will pay: Ducasse, cattle merchant, 1,000 livres; Pomiro, American, 2,000; Pomiro senior, 1,000; Déléon, recluse, 1,000; Darrignan, senior, 500; Naugaro de Saint-Paul, 500; Castéra senior, 1,200; Taton Lacreusade de Saint-Paul, 500; Loustallot de Saint-Paul, 300; Mme. Larroque, Rue de la Liberté, 1,000. Total, 9,000 livres."

The Committee of Public Safety, disconcerted by the persistent opposition of the priests, overpowered by the dechristianising movement to which this opposition had given renewed strength, looked on helplessly at these infractions of the decree relating to liberty of conscience. It limited itself to recommending the deputies to distinguish between those priests who had submitted to the laws and those who were infringing them. But it so happened that all the priests seemed animated by a counter-revolutionary spirit ; all were a cause of anxiety to the vigilant patriots of the towns, and all were at work spreading disaffection among the peasants. Finally they were assembled, after the plan of Monestier, in the district capitals ; and it was especially by this means, by keeping the ministers of the Catholic religion close at hand, that the exercise of the Catholic form of worship was prevented.

It is a fact that in almost every case where the peasants were deprived of the Catholic religion they were unable to console themselves. Thus the syndics of the parish of Saint-Just, in the commune of Haute-fage (Lot-et-Garonne), wrote to Robespierre on the 18th of *Ventôse:*

"Full of confidence in thy justice, Citizen, we beg thee, the tears in our eyes, in the name of religion, to befriend us ; we ask only for justice ; we care nothing for external show, such as processions, for we were never fanatical, and have always been peaceable ; but if, by thy favour, we may preserve public worship in the interior of our churches, and our bell as a signal to gather there, we shall bless thee for ever." [1]

Even in country districts where the priests had made themselves unpopular, the peasants could not become accustomed to dispensing with their ancient worship. Thus, in the district of Étampes, several communes which had renounced Catholicism, those of Guigneville, Soisy, Dannemois, Courances, Moigny, and

[1] Papers found at Robespierre's house, iii. 124.

Nielly, regretted their determination, and in *Pluviôse* of the year II the inhabitants of these communes began to chant the offices themselves, and to perform parts of the services. Elsewhere the schoolmaster officiated.

These meetings were represented as counter-revolutionary to the Committee of Public Safety; which, forgetful of the principle of religious liberty, and in a moment of impatience, wrote to Roux, deputy-commissioner to Aisne and the Ardennes (the 23rd of *Pluviôse*):

"The Committee of Public Safety is informed, Citizen Colleague, that once again ministers are taking the place of priests; the communal schoolmasters are meeting at Chauny and are chanting the vespers and celebrating the offices. Thou must be sensible that these absurd assemblies may become dangerous. There it is that superstition is nourished and inflamed; there does fanaticism prepare its parricidal arms and its poisons. The Committee invokes thy utmost watchfulness upon these treacherous innovations. Scatter these mobs of agitators, stifle these muddy croakings, so that the voice of reason may finally inherit; but let prudence prepare the way for its success and assure its triumph."

Here is an example which will show, at one and the same time, how tenacious the country folk were of their religion; what quarrels arose between believers and unbelievers; and the pacifying influence of certain of the people's representatives.

On the 2nd of *Floréal* of the year II, the people of Champlost (Yonne) were singing psalms in their church. A crowd of people from Brienon and Saint-Florentin were passing the church, on their way to a sale of goods to be held at the Château de Champlost. Hearing the sound of the psalms, they themselves began to sing: "*Allons, enfants de la patrie!*" One of them, Besson, marched singing to the door of the church. The Catholics came out, infuriated, and assailed the secular singers, of whom one was grievously wounded. Immediately the administration of the district of Mont-

Armance (formerly Saint-Florentin) suspended the mayor and national agent of Champlost, for having failed to prevent the affray, and ordered the churches to be closed. Their church closed, the people of Champlost, men, women, and children, went to the cemetery and sang the offices there. However, the nearest national agent wrote to the deputy Maure for information. Maure, an ardent democrat, was sorry for these poor folk who only wished to sing in their church in peace. From Tonnerre, on the 5th of *Floréal*, he replied in the following terms :

" I have received, Citizen, thy letters of yesterday. One announces the disturbance which has taken place in the commune of Champlost. I am replying as to this matter to the district administration. I perceive some imprudence in the behaviour of the patriots, who seem to have chosen to sing in order to hinder the worship in which the inhabitants of this commune were assembled. When will our patriots be wise enough no longer to have the appearance of being in agreement with the enemies of liberty ? Does not what has happened at Courcelles confirm what I suggest ? Was not Besson guilty of a serious offence in going into the entry of the place when the people were quietly singing what they call psalms, and in having disturbed their tranquillity by unseemly remarks and ridiculous threats ? Is he not responsible for the blood spilt ? Thou sayest that the national agent was with the people in the church. Certainly thou, who art educated, wouldst be blameworthy didst thou attend such a gathering. But consider that a simple peasant does not do a like wrong in committing the same action. Consider well thy functions and thy responsibility. Let the law and the national will experience no resistance ; but let wisdom and prudence guide thy steps. Thou knowest how the people love liberty. Leave it to Providence, who has overwhelmed us with gifts, to time and to fraternal education, to destroy the old prejudices. Let us make the people happy on the earth, and they will await, without anxiety, a future and uncertain happiness."

On the same date he wrote to the administrators of the district, censuring their order for the closing of the churches, as likely to disturb the public peace ; and at the same time, in a second letter, he recommends them to be strictly indulgent :

"Examine strictly the conduct of the mayor and the national agent of the commune of Champlost. If you see malevolence in it, hand them over to the tribunals. If, on the contrary, you find a lack of energy, of personal influence, then be merciful. You know by experience that educated people commit serious faults, which ought to be overlooked when they are only the result of misunderstood zeal. Behave to others as they behave to you. As for those who have struck blows and shed the blood of their brothers, the law tells you what course to follow. Severity is necessary, to frighten the ill-doers."

The peasants continued to sing Mass in many of the rural communes of Yonne; the Revolutionary Committees continued to persecute them on that account, and Maure continued to show himself compassionate, as we see by this extract from the list of his operations:

"The 16th of *Messidor*.—A number of individuals of the commune of Saint-Bris (Yonne), assembled for the exercise of the Catholic religion, were arrested on the 26th of *Prairial* for having performed the functions of a precentor. The deputy, having considered that a correction of two months and some paternal remonstrances would suffice to put these poor deluded *sans-culottes* on the right road, set them at liberty with all the more reason as there had been no effervescence, no disturbance, and as frequent instruction has begun to destroy the ancient prejudices."

Considering how the peasants held to the Catholic faith, one wonders that there was no general *jacquerie* at this period.

Doubtless this was to some extent due to the humane wisdom of such deputies as Maure or Robespierre's brother, who, travelling through Haute-Saône to join the army of Italy, freed some unhappy peasants who had been imprisoned for attending Mass. It was also because at the moment of suppression the Catholic religion was hardly practised at all except by constitutional priests, and the peasants had no liking for these priests. The deputy-commissioner Carrier wrote to the Committee of Public Safety on the 10th of *Pluviôse* in the year II:

"As for fanaticism, it is enough to expose its crimes, without attacking the liberty of religion; it must be killed, be destroyed in an indirect manner, without seeming to give it a knock-down blow; and there is now a most favourable occasion, which, taken to advantage and carefully managed, might and should strike the final blow at this terrible pest: it is the hatred which the whole peasantry entertain against the former constitutional priests. As soon as they are made to understand that they can dispense with them, they will abandon them all without regret. How I shall profit by this residue of Machiavelism!"

But the true reason why there was not a general civil war between *Brumaire* and *Thermidor* of the year II is that religion was never at any moment suppressed throughout all France at the same time.

Thus in Paris the Council General of the Commune revoked in part its order of the 3rd of *Frimaire*, which appeared to suppress religion absolutely in the capital city. Upon a fresh requisition on the part of Chaumette it resolved, on the 8th of *Frimaire*, "that it had never intended to prevent citizens from letting their houses, or paying the ministers for the exercise of any religion whatever; provided that the exercise of that religion should not be harmful to society in its manifestation." During the whole of the winter of 1793 the Catholic religion was celebrated in Paris in private chapels and oratories, in the midst of an enormous influx of Parisians and peasants from the environs. It seems that from the beginning of *Floréal* these assemblies were hindered by the orders of the sections, and that further religious meetings were more or less secret and clandestine. But there is nothing to prove that it was ever at any time impossible for a Catholic to hear Mass in Paris.

In the provinces we can see very clearly that "dechristianisation" did not take place everywhere at the same time, and even that in some places the public exercise of religion never ceased at all. All statistics are impossible, in the present state of our knowledge.

But here are some facts which contradict the hypothesis, often suggested, of a total interruption (at one moment) of Catholic worship.

In the district of Saint-Hippolyte (Doubs) the Catholic religion was still being practised at the moment of Robespierre's fall. The facts and the documents which prove this have been published by a historian whose opinion of dechristianising is extremely unfavourable. On the 3rd of *Thermidor* the deputy-commissioner Florent Guiot wrote to the Committee of Public Safety that the Catholic religion persisted in the district of Hazebrouck. Grégoire, later on, wished it to be believed that the Catholics had been persecuted by the Montagnards everywhere; yet among his papers is the proof that in April, 1794, Mass was still being publicly said in about 150 parishes, and that there were even some parishes in which public worship had never been interrupted at all. We see that this is not only the case with a few parishes, but with at least two whole districts. It may, however, be granted that there were very few places in which religious worship suffered absolutely no interruption.

But the correspondence of the deputy-commissioners shows that religious worship reappeared, either privately or in public, after having been suppressed, in a great many rural and urban parishes. Until the 9th of *Thermidor* and even later the closing of churches is mentioned; but there were churches which had remained open or which had been re-opened.

Thus at no moment was the exercise of the Catholic religion interrupted throughout all France.

This is a fact of great historical importance. It proves that it was materially impossible to suppress the Catholic religion in France. The masses, above all the rural masses, remained obstinately attached to the old religion, even in those parts of the country where they had become disgusted with their priests.

The Committee of Public Safety had felt this impossibility of "dechristianising," or rather of "decatholicising" France by violence. It endeavoured to maintain the principle of liberty of conscience. Then it was obliged to allow the deputy-commissioners to act as they willed in religious matters; and they, according to the circumstances and the neighbourhood, encouraged or prevented the use of violent means against religious worship and the persecution of believers.

This violence in no wise arose from a philosophical fanaticism; but from the exasperation of patriotic feeling, which had been wounded by the conduct of the priests, "Papists," or not "Papists." It was in the name of the safety of France that the militant democrats overturned the Catholic altars. It was in the name of the safety of France that the Government endeavoured to maintain the altars and to protect the Catholics.

## IV.

Hitherto we have spoken of the cult of the Supreme Being only by allusion. We will now consider what this cult actually was.

Freed from the Hébertists and the Dantonists, Robespierre immediately busied himself in realising his politico-religious system. As early as the 17th of *Germinal* of the year II, Couthon announced to the Convention the proximate presentation of a "projected decadal festival dedicated to the Eternal." This was an announcement of the cult of the Supreme Being, as a State religion. From this period actually dates the reaction against the principles of 1789, in the sense that thenceforward, after this announcement, freedom of thought in religious matters was no longer permitted; and in the Revolutionary Tribunal atheism

was often represented as one of the characteristics of the crime of *lèse-nation*. Thus in the trial of the "remnants of the factions," which lasted from the 21st to the 24th of *Germinal;* that is, the trial of the wives of Camille Desmoulins and Hébert, of the general officers accused of treason, and of a few survivors of Hébertism, "amalgamated" for the occasion, the constitutional bishop, Gobel, who had resigned his duties before the advance of the cult of Reason, and Chaumette, the national agent of the Commune, and one of the promoters of that cult, were accused of "having desired to efface all idea of the Divinity and to found the French Government upon atheism." The President of the Tribunal informed Gobel, who tried to justify his resignation by the wish of the sections, that no one had the right to "innovate" in religious matters without the permission of authority,[1] and he reproached Chaumette with having prevented the celebration of midnight Mass in 1793 by having closed the churches. It was partly on account of their religious opinions that these two were condemned to death.

The project announced by Couthon was presented on the 18th of *Floréal*, by Robespierre himself, as a calumniation of his "Report made in the name of the Committee of Public Safety upon the relations between religious and moral ideas and the principles of the Republic, and upon national festivals." In this report he attempted to apply, as he conceived them, the

[1] Here, according to the *Bulletin du Tribunal révolutionnaire*, are the words of the President to Gobel: "The apparent desire of the sections, the intrigues and solicitations of a few public men sold to the malevolent, could not be sufficient authorities to determine you to present your resignation, and to learn to speak against the principles which must have been natural to you; you should have waited for the first of all authorities to pronounce itself on this delicate matter; and where it was silent as to the continuation or cessation of this religious cult, no one had the right of innovation."

politico-religious ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The latter, in his *Contrat Social*, while declaring that there could no longer be any "exclusive national religion," demanded a "civil profession of faith," which fundamentally was nothing else than a State religion. "There is," he said, "a profession of faith of which it pertains to the sovereign to determine the articles, not precisely, as dogmas of religion, but as sentiments of sociability, without which it is impossible to be a good subject and a faithful citizen." These indispensable dogmas are the existence of a powerful, intelligent, beneficent, foreseeing, and provident Divinity; the life to come; the happiness of the just; the chastisement of the wicked; and the sanctity of the social contract and of the laws. You are free not to believe in all this. If you do not believe, you will be outlawed, not as impious, but as unsociable.

The "report" of Robespierre was a paraphrase of these ideas, adapted to the circumstances. He attacks those men who, sold to Pitt, "suddenly attack religions by violence, in order to set themselves up as the fiery apostles of nothingness and the fanatical missionaries of atheism." It is not as a philosopher that he attacks atheism; it is as a politician. "In the eyes of the legislator, all that is useful to the world and good in practice is the truth. The idea of the Supreme Being and of the immortality of the soul is a continual appeal to justice; it is therefore social and republican." Deism was the religion of Socrates, and that of Leonidas; "and it is a far cry from Socrates to Chaumette and from Leonidas to Father Duchesne." All the conspirators were atheists: he denounces as atheists his dead enemies, Guadet, Hébert, Vergniaud, Gensonné, Danton. After the fashion of a preacher, he hurls anathemas at the "sect" of the Encyclopædists. Having praised Rousseau as Lucretius exalted Epicurus, he turns to the priests, and with an air at

the same time irritable and reassuring, he opposes to their corrupt Christianity the purified Christianity of the true servants of the Supreme Being. This Deistic cult must be national, and it will be if all public education is directed towards a single religious end, and above all if popular and official festivals glorify the Divinity. This religion will succeed, if the women are willing : " O Frenchwomen ! cherish liberty ! . . . make use of your empire in order to extend that of republican virtue. O Frenchwomen ! you are worthy of the love and respect of the earth ! "

But would one be free to be a philosopher after the fashion of Diderot, for example? His reply is vague and terrible. " Woe to him who seeks to extinguish sublime enthusiasm ! " The new national religion will leave men only the liberty of good. " Command victory," said Robespierre, " but above all plunge vice into nothingness. The enemies of the republic are corrupt men." Vice is atheism ; and all those are atheists who, in religious matters, do not think with Robespierre. Evidently there was to be no religious liberty.

Here is the decree by which the cult of the Supreme Being was established and organised :

" I. The French people recognises the existence of the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul. II. It recognises that the proper worship of the Supreme Being is the accomplishment of man's duties. III. It puts in the first rank of these duties those of detesting bad faith and tyranny, of punishing tyrants and traitors, of succouring the unfortunate, of respecting the weak, of defending the oppressed, of doing to others all the good in one's power, and of being unjust to none. IV. Festivals will be instituted to recall man to the thought of the Divinity and the dignity of his being. V. They will borrow their names from the glorious events of our Revolution, the virtues most dear and useful to man, and the greatest benefits of nature. VI. The French Republic will celebrate every year the festivals of July 14, 1789, of August 10, 1792, of January 21, 1793, and of May 31, 1793. VII. On every tenth day it will celebrate the festivals here enumerated : Of the Supreme Being and Nature.—Of the Human Species.—Of the French

People.—Of the Benefactors of Humanity.—Of the Martyrs of Liberty.—Of Liberty and Equality.—Of the Republic.—Of the Liberty of the World.—Of Hatred of Tyrants and Traitors.—Of Truth.—Of Justice.—Of Modesty.—Of Glory and Immortality.—Of Friendship.—Of Frugality.—Of Courage.—Of Good Faith.—Of Heroism.—Of Disinterestedness.—Of Stoicism.—Of Love.—Of Conjugal Love.—Of Paternal Love.—Of Maternal Tenderness.—Of Filial Piety.—Of Infancy.—Of Youth.—Of Manhood.—Of Old Age.—Of Misfortune.—Of Agriculture.—Of Industry.—Of our Forefathers.—Of Posterity.—Of Happiness.—VIII. The Committees of Public Safety and of Public Instruction are instructed to present a plan for the organisation of these festivals.—IX. The National Convention calls all talents worthy to serve the cause of humanity to the honour of collaborating in their establishment by means of hymns and civic chants, and by all the means that may contribute to their embellishment and utility.—X. The Committee of Public Safety will distinguish the works that appear the most proper to fulfil these purposes, and will recompense their authors.—XI. The liberty of religion is maintained, conformably with the decree of the 18th of *Frimaire*.—XII. All aristocratic and other assemblies contrary to public order will be suppressed.—XIII. In case of disturbances of which any form of worship whatsoever shall be the occasion or the motive, those who shall excite such disturbances by fanatical preaching or by counter-revolutionary insinuations, and those who shall provoke them by unjust and gratuitous violence, shall be equally punished according to the rigour of the laws.—XIV. A separate report will be made as to the detailed dispositions relating to the present decree.—On the 20th of *Prairial* next will be celebrated a festival in honour of the Supreme Being.—David is instructed to lay a plan of the festival before the National Convention."

We see that this decree proclaimed precisely the few dogmas upon which Rousseau established his purified Christianity, his profession of civil faith. It may also be remarked that to the festival of the Supreme Being Robespierre added thirty-five other festivals, arranged by the hazard of the pen. But the decree did not organise, among all these festivals, any but that of the Supreme Being ; the others were presented only in a state of proposal.

If we are to believe the *Moniteur*, Robespierre's speech was interrupted by frequent applause, which was doubtless intended more for the talent and omni-

potence of the dictator than for the new religion. It no doubt appeared opportune, by a demonstration which might pass for platonic, to flatter the mystic instincts of a man who was inspiring terror by his recent and bloody victories over his political adversaries.' As Cambon said later, the Convention might regard the decree which they were required to pass as being "without aim and without object." There was no debate worth mentioning. When Robespierre had left the tribune and David had read the plan he had prepared, voices demanded that the report should be printed. This, however, was too commonplace an honour for the new pontiff and the new religion. Couthon declared, in the tones of a priest, that "Providence had been offended," and that the printing of the report was not enough to avenge it:

"The report must not only be printed in the ordinary form and despatched to the armies, to all the constituted bodies, and all the people's clubs, but it must be printed as a placard also, and posted up in the streets. Men must be able to read on the walls and sentry-boxes what the true profession of faith of the French nation is. (*Applause.*) I demand finally that as the morality of the national house of representatives has been calumniated among foreign peoples, Robespierre's report and the projected decree which have been laid before you shall be translated into all languages and circulated throughout the world. (*Applause.*)"

Barère, as if to divert attention from the Supreme Being and to cool the prevailing enthusiasm, demanded that the festival in honour of Bara and Viala should take place on the 30th of *Prairial*. This measure was decreed, but that which Couthon had just proposed was also decreed, and the whole decree relating to the Supreme Being was adopted without discussion.

On the 23rd of *Floréal* the Committee of Public Safety passed the following resolution, in which Robespierre's speech was treated as a sacred text, as though the Gospel of the new religion:

"The Committee of Public Safety resolves that on the front of buildings hitherto dedicated to religious uses the inscription *Temple of Reason* shall be replaced by these words of the first article of the decree of the National Convention of the 18th of *Floréal : The French People recognises the existence of the Supreme Being and the Immortality of the Soul.* The Committee also resolves that the report and the decree of the 18th of *Floréal* shall be read publicly every tenth day during one month in such buildings. The national agents in the communes of the Republic are entrusted with the execution of the present resolution ; they will report without delay to the Committee."[1]

The agents of the new cult immediately seized upon the churches, on the doors of which they inscribed in letters of gold their master's words. They were responsible for a petition requesting that the new cult should be salaried by the State.

On the 24th of *Floréal*, on the motion of the Robespierrist Jault, the Commune of Paris signified its adherence, and the national agent Payan read, in its name, before the Convention, on the 25th, a congratulatory address containing an ingenious and politic eulogy of the decree of the 18th, endeavouring to reassure the free-thinkers, and protesting that there was no question of making a new religion.

But Payan spoke in vain. The new religion asserted itself, four days later, through the mouth of the Mayor of Paris himself, who, in a proclamation to the inhabitants, the subject of which was the food supply, informed them that God was about to reward France for the decree of the 18th of *Floréal* by awarding her plentiful harvests.

"The abundance is there," said Lescot-Fleuriot, "it is waiting for you. The Supreme Being, Protector of the liberty of nations, has commanded Nature to prepare you abundant harvests. He is watching you. Be worthy of His benefits."[2]

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[1] Minutes signed by Couthon, Robespierre, Collot d'Herbois, and Barère.

[2] *Proclamation du maire de Paris aux habitants, 29 Floréal, an II ;* a printed placard. The department of Paris embraced the cult of the Supreme Being on the 28th.

It was essential to draw the Jacobins into the movement, and to obtain from them more than mere lip service. A member of the Government, young Jullien, one of the two commissaries who formed the Executive Commission of Public Instruction, assured the Club that the sentiment of religion was the soul of patriotism, and that the soldiers sent against the Vendéeans got killed "only to throw themselves into the bosom of Divinity." He proposed an address of congratulation to the Convention.

The Jacobins were at heart Robespierrists rather than mystics: they boggled over thus transforming themselves into a religious sect, and a lively debate arose. Robespierre and Couthon had to intervene; to produce the spectre of "foreign conspiracy." Robespierre was even obliged to disown and reject a passage of the address in which Jullien had demanded, in imitation of Rousseau, that all those who did not believe in the Divinity should be banished from the Republic.

"This principle," said Robespierre, "must not be adopted. It would result in inspiring with too great a terror a multitude of the foolish and corrupt. I am not in favour of proceeding against all of them, but against those only who conspire against liberty. I think we must leave this truth where it is, in Rousseau's writings; not put it into practice." [1]

Finally the address was adopted and read before the Convention on the 27th of *Floréal*. The very words of Rousseau relating to the indispensable dogmas were reproduced and eulogised. There were no "true Jacobins" but those who accepted these dogmas. The President, Carnot, replied coldly, speaking as a disciple of Diderot rather than as an admirer of the *Vicaire Savoyard;* appeared to confound God with Nature, and, by the tone of his phrases, showed plainly, as far

[1] *Journal de la Montagne.* This opposition to the cult of the Supreme Being in the very heart of the Jacobins ended finally in the election of Fouché as president, on the 18th of *Prairial* following.

as that was possible without risking the scaffold, that he did not embrace the new religion.[1]

An incident now occurred which allowed Robespierre to ignore such timid and cautious opposition to his pontifical schemes. On the evening of the 4th of *Prairial* a young girl, one Cécile Renault, called at his lodgings, and complained so vehemently at not having found him that she aroused suspicion. She was arrested and searched, and in her pockets were found two small penknives, mere child's toys. She declared herself a royalist, spoke of Robespierre as a tyrant, but denied that she had had any intention of killing him. Immediately, in many parts of France, there was a movement of sympathy for Robespierre; and letters have been found among his papers in which he was addressed not merely as a pontiff, but as a god. Deputations crowded to the bar of the Convention, in order to thank the Supreme Being for having saved Robespierre.[2]

He was elected President of the Convention on the 16th of *Prairial;* he was thus in advance given the leading *rôle* in the festival of the 20th, which was celebrated under his presidency. He made speeches; he set fire to an effigy of atheism; he was full of fine words and arresting gestures; he appeared as a Government leader and a religious leader; as a pontiff and a dictator.

[1] Already, on the 23rd, to a deputation of Genevois who had just been congratulating the Convention for having ordered the translation of Rousseau's remains to the Panthéon, Carnot had replied with a very subtle and philosophical eulogy of the author of *Émile;* "who," he said, "gave life to morality, and caused the truth of the spirit, which is inert, to pass into the heart, where it meets the seed of the virtues" (*Moniteur,* reprint, xx. 456). But he said nothing in praise of Rousseau's neo-Christianity. We may also remark his chilly reply, on the 30th, to the Fraternal Society, which had just embraced the new cult.

[2] Almost at the same time Collot d'Herbois was the object of a much more serious attempt at assassination, which also excited a certain amount of feeling.

This festival of the 20th of *Prairial* has remained famous.[1] In some quarters the cult of the Supreme Being has appeared, retrospectively, to be a solemn reaction against the cult of Reason. But the mass of the French people had no such feeling. To provincial eyes the cult of Reason and the cult of the Supreme Being were very much the same thing. On the 11th of *Floréal* of the year II the deputy-commissioner Chaudron-Rousseau had written from Limoux to the Committee of Public Safety :

"Here I am, in the most fanatical district of the department of Aude ; I am determined to be present here on a *tenth day* (*jour de décade*). The latter will be remarkable on account of the opening of a Temple of Reason, which will not make us forget the Divinity. I and my collaborators will offer the latter our chief and our profoundest homage. We, like you, regard the former as being only an incarnation of the latter.

Thus, before the 18th of *Floréal*, in worshipping Reason men considered they were worshipping God ; after that date they worshipped God without any intention of ceasing to worship Reason, as the latter was regarded merely as an emanation of the former. In reality there was no change in the new national and philosophical religion which the Government had sought to establish in the Catholic places of worship, and to substitute for Catholicism. Under the name of the Supreme Being, as under the name of Reason, it was the *patrie* that men really worshipped ; and the cult of the Supreme Being, like the cult of Reason, was bound, unless the people very clearly distinguished one from the other, to lose itself in patriotism.

Once patriotism was reassured by the victory of Fleurus the cult of the Supreme Being began to languish, discredited now and useless ; its pontiff having once disappeared it disappeared with him, to be reborn later in other shapes, when the country should once more be in danger.

[1] I have given the details in my book, *Le Culte de la Raison.*

## CHAPTER IV

### THE REVOLUTION OF THE 9TH OF *THERMIDOR*

I. Causes of Robespierre's fall.—II. The "days" of the 8th and 9th of *Thermidor* of the year II.—III. Insurrection and defeat of the Commune and the Robespierrists.

### I.

WITH the exception of a small number (Couthon, Saint-Just, Le Bas), the colleagues of Robespierre in the two Government committees saw in him a dictator, a tyrant. It seems that at the festival of the 20th of *Prairial* a number of deputies execrated him under their breath. Why did his adversaries wait so long before opposing his ambition? Why, in both the Committee of Public Safety and the Convention, did men grant him all he demanded: the decree of the 18th of *Floréal*, the decree of the 22nd of *Prairial*, the very instruments of his rule?

Because Robespierre's popularity had so far rendered him impregnable.

One of those who was to contribute to his fall, Fréron, spoke from the tribune a month after that fall, on the 9th of *Fructidor* of the year II:

"The tyrant, who oppressed his colleagues even more than the nation, was enveloped to such an extent in an appearance of the most popular virtues, and the confidence and consideration of the people, which he had usurped by five years of unremitting hypocrisy, formed

around him such an invisible rampart, that we should have imperilled both the nation and liberty itself, if we had abandoned ourselves earlier to our impatience to kill the tyrant. (*Prolonged applause.*) We have had to live a long time indeed under the axe ; we have had for a long time to tolerate and endure the universal oppression, in order that the oppressor should himself let fall at least a corner of his mask. If, when we struck, the spell had not been wholly broken, either the blow had not been mortal, or death, in depriving him of the throne, would have endowed him with the worship of a cult ; and on the altar raised to him by a mourning nation, some ambitious man, capable of the same scheming, the same crimes, would have set the foundations of a throne and a tyranny never perhaps to be destroyed. (*Applause recommences.*)"

We have already explained the origin and the development of Robespierre's popularity. It was then at its apogee. From all quarters of France, as is proved by the letters found among his papers, came a wild impulse of admiration, of sympathy, of personal adulation. Many Catholics put their hope in him. If imprisoned, they looked to him for their coming delivery. Deprived of their religion, they saw in the festival of the Supreme Being a prelude to the resurrection of Catholicism. Not only the common people turned to him, but the *bourgeoisie* and the educated classes. Garat, in his *Historical Memoirs of the Eighteenth Century*, assures us that La Harpe wrote the pontiff of the Supreme Being an enthusiastic letter. Boissy d'Anglas, in his *Essay on the National Festivals*, wrote as follows : "Robespierre, speaking of the Supreme Being to the most enlightened nation of the world, reminds me of Orpheus teaching to man the principles of civilisation and morality." Boissy d'Anglas was not the only admirer of Robespierre in the centre or the "Marsh" of the Convention. The moderates formed the basis of the Robespierrist majority ; firstly because Robespierre had saved the Seventy-Five from the scaffold, and secondly because they saw in him the possible and probable leader of an approaching reaction.

Fréron was thus right in saying that a premature attack upon Robespierre would only have strengthened his dictatorship. What Fréron omitted to say was that if Robespierre's enemies hesitated to strike at him, it was also through patriotism. It would not have been possible to overthrow him without producing a state of disastrous confusion, without compromising the unity of the Government and the national defences. It was essential to wait until the success of the armies should allow them to risk this crisis with safety.

The causes of the "day" of the 9th of *Thermidor* are, firstly and especially the military victories of *Messidor;* and in particular the victory of Fleurus. This victory, in place of strengthening Robespierre and the Government, went far to ruin them; it proved the uselessness and the atrocity of the recent aggravation of the Terror. "These victories," said Barère, later, "pursued Robespierre as implacably as the Furies!" In vain did Robespierre request Barère not to write such "frothy" reports of the victories; in vain did he prophesy the advent of a military dictatorship; in vain did he exclaim, at the Jacobins, on the 21st of *Messidor:* "One judges of the prosperity of a State less by its external successes, than by the fortunate condition of the interior." The acclamations with which the Convention, the public, and the Jacobins themselves welcomed all news from the Army, the standards of the enemies hung in the hall of the Convention, the gaiety of Paris and of France, showed by contrast the odious character, the anachronism, of the bloody activity of the Revolutionary Tribunal, now that the country was no longer in danger. It seemed that the suppression of the Terror depended on a single man; and that man, it seemed, was Robespierre. His enemies treacherously pointed him out as the master of France; whether they clad in a red chemise that Cécile Renault who had sought to kill him; whether the Committee

of General Security tried to compromise him in the trial of an old insane mystic, Catherine Théot ; whether a certain Magenthies, ridiculing the cult of the Supreme Being, petitioned in favour of the death penalty for all blasphemers against divinity ; or whether they pretended, in the journals and at the Jacobins, to load the pontiff of the cult with the most outrageous eulogies, as though he were indeed a tyrant.

From the time the law of the 22nd of *Prairial* was voted, fear gave his opponents courage, and it was by the Committee of General Security that the conspiracy was hatched ; a conspiracy which was joined not only by the most part of the members of that Committee, but by two members of the Committee of Public Safety ; Billaud-Varenne and Collot d'Herbois. The conspirators did not seek to arrest the Terror ; on the contrary, they reproached Robespierre for his moderation with respect to the Catholics and his advances towards the "Marsh." The state of semi-seclusion in which he spent *Messidor* allowed them to lay their plans. Barère felt that might was on their side. On the 7th of *Thermidor* he read the Convention a long report, in which he censured those who were not reassured by victory, those who were meditating yet further proscriptions. The Convention voted that the report should be printed and despatched to the communes. This was the first act of hostility towards Robespierre, who replied to it by his famous speech of the following day, the 8th of *Thermidor*.

## II.

This speech is usually represented as being, in a sense, a death testament ; and it does in truth produce an effect of melancholy not wholly devoid of nobility ; it reads, to some extent, like an appeal to posterity. Contemporaries saw it as principally an act of policy,

and the conclusions they drew from it were threatening. Robespierre demanded the complete purgation of the Committee of General Security, the partial purgation of the Committee of Public Safety. He denounced a number of members of Convention ; the "financiers" Mallarmé and Ramel (he had written Cambon's name, but dared not speak it from the tribune) ; equivocal politicians such as Barère ; those who had engineered the affair of Catherine Théot, such as Vadier ; the politically corrupt, the infuriated demagogues, and a "handful of rascals" ; and held a vague threat over the heads of many. Men saw in his speech the elements of a formidable *amalgam*. They foresaw the cast of a huge net about to fall on the Convention ; an enormous "trial" before the Revolutionary Tribunal. All that were left of Danton's and Hébert's friends felt themselves threatened : the more so as Robespierre had appealed to the "Marsh." The Convention having voted that the speech should be printed and despatched to the communes, the recall of this decree was immediately demanded, by Vadier, Cambon, and Billaud-Varenne. The Convention maintained that the speech should be printed, but revoked that part of the decree which referred to its despatch to the communes. This was Robespierre's first check.

He re-read his speech before the Jacobins in the evening, and aroused a frantic enthusiasm. David cried that he would drink hemlock with him. Billaud and Collot were hooted and expelled. The club assumed an attitude of insurrection. The night of the 8th of *Thermidor* was passed in secret conferences ; and the conspirators, not without difficulty, persuaded the leaders of the "Marsh," Durand-Maillane, Palasne-Champeaux, and Boissy d'Anglas, to abandon Robespierre in order to arrest the course of the Terror. To the Montagnards, on the contrary, they represented Robespierre as a moderate and a devotee, who was

seeking to weaken the mainspring of the Revolutionary Government.

The session of the 9th of *Thermidor* opened with a speech by Saint-Just, in which he very adroitly sketched out a political programme such as might rally the whole Convention. He did not hesitate to disown the personal ambition of Robespierre, and to indicate the means of setting a term to his dictatorship, without violence and without a *coup-d'état*, and, replying to the secret inclinations of the Convention, he wished to propose that it should decree "that the institutions which will immediately be outlined will present a means by which the Government, without losing anything of its revolutionary force, cannot tend to become despotic, to favour ambition, or to oppress or usurp the national representation." If Saint-Just had been able to speak to the end, it is probable that the situation would have been pacifically resolved ; Robespierre would no longer have been dictator, and the Thermidorian reaction would perhaps have been avoided. But Tallien interrupted Saint-Just, to demand "that the veil should be rent." The Convention declared itself permanent. Billaud-Varenne denounced the insurrection of the Jacobins. He censured the decree of the 22nd of *Prairial;* not as being unjust, but as favouring Robespierre's ambition ; whom he accused of having formerly shielded Danton.

Robespierre sprang to the tribune. Collot d'Herbois, who presided, refused him speech. There were cries of "*Down with the tyrant!*" Tallien, brandishing a dagger, appealed to the Right, as Billaud had appealed to the Left, denouncing the barbarity of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and describing Robespierre as "a Catiline surrounded by new Veruses." The Convention decreed the arrest of Hanriot and his staff. Robespierre again flung himself upon the tribune. Cries of "*Down with the tyrant!*" forced him again

to descend. Barère, in the name of the Committee, proposed some insignificant measures, and seemed uncertain of the success of the struggle. Vadier followed him, uttered pleasantries concerning Catherine Théot, arousing laughter when he should have struck. Then came Tallien: "I demand speech that I may lead the discussion back to the true point!" Robespierre shouted: "I can manage that!" There were murmurs and shouts: "You have not the right to speak, tyrant!" Tallien spoke; he accused Robespierre of conspiracy, which conspiracy he discovered in Robespierre's speech of the day before. Robespierre tried to reply. He was hooted at; Collot, the President, sounded his bell; then gave up his chair to another conspirator, Thuriot, who also refused to allow Robespierre to speak. The latter implored the "Marsh" in vain: "It is to you, pure men as you are, that I speak; not to brigands. . . ." Repulsed on all sides, his efforts exhausted him; his voice gave way. It is said that Garnier (from Aube) cried out: "Danton's blood is choking him!" and that Robespierre replied: "So it is Danton you wish to avenge!"

Then an obscure deputy by the name of Louchet dared to utter the decisive word. "It is beyond question," he said, "that Robespierre has domineered over us; for that reason alone I demand a decree of accusation!" There was applause; there were shouts: "*Vote for his arrest!*" Robespierre, says the *Républicain français*, "furiously mounted four benches above that on which he had been sitting," and regarded the galleries, which appeared to be hostile. He felt himself lost, and upon the demand for his arrest he replied: "*And I demand death!*" "You have deserved it a thousand times!" cried the Terrorist, André Dumont. Robespierre repeated mechanically: "*Death! Death! Death!*" Then his brother, who was also a deputy, went up to him, taking his hand, and declared that he

wished to share his fate. Le Bas did the same. For a moment the Convention appeared to be moved, to be hesitating. Then it decreed the arrest, not only of the two brothers and Le Bas, but of Couthon and Saint-Just also. They were seized by gendarmes, and led to the hall of the Committee of General Security.

The same decree had ordered the arrest of the commandant of the troops, Hanriot, and of his staff. Another and earlier decree had replaced Hanriot by a certain Hesmart, an officer (*chef de légion*) of *gendarmerie*. The latter repaired to the Hôtel de Ville to arrest Hanriot ; but was himself arrested by him. Hanriot, displaying a feverish activity, had assembled the *gendarmerie* in the Place de Grève, collected the *chefs de légion*, beat the drums, sounded the tocsin, closed the barriers, and convoked the sections. He was daring enough to enter the quarters of the Committee of General Security almost unaccompanied, with the purpose of delivering Robespierre. Arrested himself, he was delivered by his followers. However, at the sound of the tocsin a certain number of National Guards had assembled before the Hôtel de Ville ; but not enough, nor sufficiently at one, to form an insurrectionary army. People ran hither and thither, asking for news ; not precisely understanding what there was to be accomplished, and exhibiting no especial enthusiasm either for or against Robespierre.

## III.

At the news of the decree against Robespierre, the Council General of the Commune assembled, under the presidency of the mayor, Lescot-Fleuriot ; and at the request of the national agent, Payan, solemnly declared that it was in a state of insurrection, in order to deliver the Convention from the " oppression " from which it was suffering. It prepared for battle, confirmed

the actions of Hanriot, ordered the arrest of fourteen deputies: Collot d'Herbois, Amar, Léonard Bourdon, Dubarran, Fréron, Tallien, Panis, Carnot, Dubois-Crancé, Vadier, Javogues, Fouché, Granet, and Moyse Bayle. It then nominated an Executive Committee of nine members (including Payan and Coffinhal), whose leader, in the intention of the Commune, was to be Robespierre. The latter, taken to the prison of the Luxembourg, was then refused entrance by the gaolers, by an order of the Commune. He was then led to the Mairie (a building distinct from the Hôtel de Ville), where he was received as a friend. The Commune sent to him, inviting him to put himself at its head. He refused, on account of a legal scruple. Coffinhall tried to force him; almost carried him off.

Behold him at the Hôtel de Ville, on the evening of the 9th, about nine in the evening. His brother he found there; later came Le Bas, Saint-Just, and Couthon, set free by the insurgents or refused by the gaolers. Moreover, the Jacobin Club declared for Robespierre, held a permanent session, and communicated with the Commune. The insurrection began to organise itself; it had its leaders; it seemed they had might on their side. But opinion was against them.

The assembled sections hesitated to pronounce for the Commune; but a minority only rebelled against the Convention. Paris, which had revolted against men, and for ideas, did not seem willing to put herself in a state of insurrection for a man.

The Government and the Convention profited by the state of Paris. The two Committees made an appeal to the sections, and busied themselves with protecting the Convention. The latter assembled a second time on the evening of the 9th, swore to die at its post, appointed one of its numbers, Barras, Commander-General of the armed forces, and gave him,

as subordinates, a number of other deputies, among whom was Fréron. It then outlawed Robespierre, and all the deputies who had escaped arrest, as well as the mayor and the rebellious officers. This decree, which was immediately reported all over Paris, rallied the majority of the sections about the Convention, and struck fear into the mob of armed men who were awaiting the orders of the Commune on the Place de Grève. At midnight a torrential downpour of rain dispersed almost all these groups, and when the Conventional troops marched into the Place at two in the morning, it was almost empty.

That the Commune had so long delayed to march on the Convention was due to the fact that Robespierre had refused to place himself at the head of the movement. He spoke, but performed nothing; refusing even to sign an appeal to arms; not because he lacked courage, but because he desired a species of legal insurrection, the elements of which failed him. Besieged and urged to action by his followers, he took the pen and traced the first three letters of his name. . . . Was it at this moment that the troops of the Convention marched out upon the Place de Grève? When Léonard Bourdon, accompanied by some gendarmes, made his way into the Hôtel de Ville, he found Robespierre stretched on the ground, his jaw broken by a pistol bullet. A gendarme named Méda boasted that he had intended to kill the "tyrant" and was rewarded for it. But his contemporaries believed rather that Robespierre had attempted to kill himself, as Le Bas had done. Robespierre the younger had thrown himself from a window, but had failed to kill himself. The conspirators were seized without difficulty. The Convention was master of the Hôtel de Ville, the Jacobin Club had been provisionally closed by Legendre, and the insurrection was vanquished.

On the following day, the 10th of *Thermidor*, to-

wards half-past seven in the evening, Robespierre and his brother, Couthon, Saint-Just, Fleuriot-Lescot, Payan, Hanriot, and several members of the Jacobin Club and the Commune, in all twenty-two, were guillotined. "The crowd was innumerable," says the journalist Perlet; "cries of joy, shouts of applause, of '*Down with the Tyrant!*' '*Life to the Republic!*' and imprecations of all kinds resounded from all sides along the road." Shortly afterwards 82 Robespierrists, mostly members of the Commune, were sent to the guillotine, on the simple proof of their identity. It was not enough to kill Robespierre and his friends; they were abused, they were denounced to France as royalists, as having sold themselves to foreign powers. Those among them who survived, as did David, disowned the rest. From all quarters of France addresses of congratulation were despatched to the Convention; Robespierre was denounced as a Cromwell, a Catiline, and no one defended his execrated memory. In him all the excesses of the Terror were personified; men believed that by the death of a man the Republic was saved and pacified.

# CHAPTER V

## THE DECADENCE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT

I. The Thermidorian reaction.—II. Maintenance of the Revolutionary Government.—III. Reorganisation of the central power. Administrative decentralisation.—IV. The Deputy-Commissioners. The People's Clubs. The Revolutionary Committees.—V. The Commune of Paris.—VI. The National Guard.—VII. The Revolutionary Tribunal. Revocation of various Terrorist laws.—VIII. The rule of the Press.—IX. General characteristics of the decadence of the Revolutionary Government.

MILITARY defeats had led to the formation of the Revolutionary Government, which, created for the purpose of national defence, fulfilled its office, expelled the enemy, and assured the independence and unity of France. Having conquered the invader, this Government, evoked by circumstance, had no longer any reason for existing, and indeed the repetition of victories led to its disappearance. It had been organised gradually, piece by piece, without plan, without method, at the hazard of events ; and each of its members had been formed or strengthened after one of the succession of recurrent disasters experienced both in the frontier war and the civil war. Its final dissolution was of the same nature ; piece by piece, without plan, without method, at the hazard of events ; and each of its members was destroyed or enfeebled by a military or diplomatic victory, or by success in the civil war.

## I.

This gradual decadence was to last as long as the Convention itself ; that is, until the Constitution of the year III was put into execution ; until the Directory ; from the 10th of *Thermidor* of the year II to the 5th of *Brumaire* of the year IV. France remained for these fourteen months under the rule of the " Provisional Revolutionary Government," so called by the decree of October 10th, 1793. This is the period known as the *Thermidorian reaction.*

The phrase, the *Thermidorian reaction,* is employed here because usage imposes it ; but it is not justified by the facts. Was not the true reaction that which had for its object the prevention of free thought? This reaction had commenced in *Germinal* of the year II, when the Revolutionary Tribunal, in violation of the Declaration of Rights, began to condemn citizens for their religious opinions ; and above all when Robespierre, in the following month, attacked the freedom of the conscience by imposing a State religion. After *Thermidor* we see the religious reaction gradually dying down ; a certain liberty of thought exists ; the liberal system of separation of Church and State is once more established ; public instruction is being organised.

Here we have a great step forward. Essential liberty is ratified ; national education is established ; and if, side by side with this progress, there is at least a partial reaction, it is at first a reaction against persons ; against Robespierre and his supporters ; then against the sometime agents of the Terrorist rule ; finally against all democratic republicans. It was the hatred of persons that led the Government to react (by means of laws), not against the ideas of the Revolution as a whole, but against one idea only ; the idea whose triumph had been contemporary with Robespierre's dictatorship ; namely, the democratic idea.

Perhaps it was rather out of hatred of the Terrorists, not on account of any theoretical preference, that democracy was abolished by the Constitution of the year III, which re-established the political privileges of the *bourgeoisie*.

In its general results, the Thermidorian period was a period of partial realisation of the philosophical ideas of the eighteenth century. It will be as well to explain at the outset the general character of this so-called reaction, in order that we may not misconceive either the true meaning or the actual goal of the complex movement of opinion in the midst of which occurred the decadence of the provisional institutions which constituted the Revolutionary Government.

## II.

The aim of the Thermidorians, so to call the authors of the anti-Robespierrist revolution of the 9th and 10th of *Thermidor*, was not to destroy the Revolutionary Government. That they maintained it was not despite themselves, but because they wished to maintain it, and this wish they made public in the most definite manner. At the session of the 24th of *Thermidor* Barère stated :

"We have been saved by the Revolutionary Government. The scoundrels and intriguers around us fear nothing but the Revolutionary Government; so to this single basis, this Government which hastens the movement of armies and preserves what our victories have won, must everything be referred."

"I ask Barère," interrupted Turreau, "which of us opposes the Revolutionary Government?"

"I have not," replied Barère, "said that there was a single member of the Convention who did not desire the Revolutionary Government I am speaking to the Assembly, not to men's passions. I have asked that before carrying our inquiries any further, the prime foundation

should be laid. Well, let us all agree, let us all declare that we want the Revolutionary Government. (*'Yes, Yes!'* cry all the members, rising and waving their hats as by a single movement. *'Yes! Yes! we all demand it!'* Applause broke out repeatedly.) I know no one who does not desire a just government. The Revolutionary Government is the justice of the people."[1]

Considerably later, on the 29th of *Ventôse* of the year III, one of its members having proposed the abolition of the Revolutionary Government, the Convention rejected the proposal; and, by referring it to its Committees, proved that it was determined to maintain the existing state of things until the moment, relatively remote, when it should have completed the elaboration of a Constitution.

It might, while maintaining the *status quo*, have abolished its qualification; have erased the word "Revolutionary" from the title of its provisional institutions. But it did not wish to do so, intending as it did to govern according to revolutionary principles; that is, by a combination of the legislative with the executive power; by exceptional methods; by its own dictatorship, with no definite laws to limit its actions; and this because the danger to the country, despite the French victories, appeared still too serious to allow as yet a resumption of normal ways and means.

But the Convention did suppress, in its orders and enactments and proceedings, the word "Terror"; it hurled retrospective anathemas at the Terror; it disowned and branded the Terrorist measures which it hitherto had unanimously voted.

On the 2nd of *Fructidor* of the year II that one of its members who had been most opposed to the party of Robespierre; the very member whose motion, at the session of the 9th of *Thermidor*, had led to the decree of the "tyrant's" arrest, namely, Louchet,

[1] *Moniteur*, reprint, xxi. 476.

declared that there was no other means of saving the commonwealth "than the maintenance everywhere, on the general orders of the day, of the Terror." "Then," says the *Moniteur*, "violent complaints interrupted the orator; from all parts of the hall the cry broke out: '*Justice! Justice!*'" Louchet was forced to retract.

Yet it was by means of the Terror, but by a new Terror, that the Convention continued to govern; it terrorised the Democratic opposition, as it had formerly terrorised the Royalist or Federalist opposition. The Red Terror was followed by the White Terror. But Terror was still a means of government.

It is thus correct to say that the Revolutionary Government existed after *Thermidor*, and lasted as long as the Convention did. But it was modified little by little; so that the mainspring was gradually slackened; and here are some of these modifications.

## III.

Let us speak first of all of the reorganisation of the central power and the Committee of Public Safety.

The Thermidorians were anxious that the Revolutionary Government should no longer offer the means of dictatorship to a single man. They were not content with sending to the scaffold the would-be dictator, Robespierre, with two members of his Government, Saint-Just and Couthon. They wished, by alterations in the laws, to prevent any other citizen from attempting to seize on the dictatorship; and with this in view they violated the unity of the Government.

Here occurred the first miscalculation of those whom we shall call the Thermidorians of the Left. They thought it was enough that Robespierre was executed. They nowhere saw his successor in popularity, so they tried to induce the Convention to preserve the Com-

mittee of Public Safety with all its powers, in order to preserve the unity of the Government.

As early as the evening of the 11th of *Thermidor*, Barère tried to obtain the ratification of the *status quo* by proposing to replace merely the three members of the Committee who had been guillotined, namely, Robespierre, Saint-Just, and Couthon, by three others : Bernard (of Saintes), Eschassériaux, and Charles Duval. Already the cry of "*To the vote!*" was raised when Merlin (of Thionville) demanded an adjournment, and Cambon forthwith began to criticise the organisation of the Government, in which the Committee of Public Safety was overburdened with affairs. He demanded that all the Committees of the Convention should be replaced by twelve Committees, each of which should supervise one of twelve Executive Commissions.

"The Committees would meet, in part or in entirety, on the invitation of a commissary, at a common centre, which would be the Committee of Public Safety, for all matters which should relate to the executive, and in the Convention for legislative matters. Thenceforward the Convention would be the centre of government. The session would be made more interesting by the labours of the Committees, all the members of the Convention would be employed in supervising the Government and would do the work which as things are now might be in the hands of the *chefs de bureau*."

Others proposed immediate means against the recurrence of a personal dictatorship, and amid a scene of enthusiasm, to cries of "*Vive la République!*" the Convention decreed "that all its Committees should be renewed at the rate of a quarter each month, and by nominal appeal, and that the members leaving each month could not be re-elected before the expiration of another month." Thus the Convention, inspired by its fears, by the remembrance of Robespierre's personal power and reassured by the victory of Fleurus, did not hesitate to sacrifice the governmental stability,

which had apparently been one of the factors of the success of the national defence.

On the 13th of *Thermidor* it completed the Committee of Public Safety by adding to it not three members: but six: Laloy, Eschassériaux, Bréard, Thuriot, Treilhard, Tallien.[1]

On the 14th Barère read the report which he had been instructed to prepare upon Cambon's proposal. While accepting the idea of the twelve Committees and the twelve corresponding executive Commissions, he was anxious to maintain the preponderance of the Committee of Public Safety.

"The Committee of Public Safety," he said, "will be the central point of all operations, at least in theory, in order to give unity to the legislative work and harmony to the executive means. The Committee will continue, according to the law of the 12th of *Germinal*, its immediate supervision of the twelve executive Commissions, which are the arms given by the Convention to the national Government. You wish to establish the unity of the Republic; you must therefore ensure a spirit of unity in the laws and other measures; and the Committee must have, not indeed a special monopoly of any kind of work, but the means of knowing what is being done by the various sections of the Government; otherwise we should have twelve Governments, twelve Legislatures, and a moral federalism in place of republican unity. The Committees will be among these means, and will correspond with the Commissions. The Commissions will bear the names of the Committees you are about to establish. The twelve Committees will carry on the work of legislation; the Committee of Public Safety will perform the administrative duties, and the supervision of the Commissions."

The Convention voted an adjournment. It was unwilling to allow the omnipotence of the Committee of Public Safety to continue. It was not that the phrase "Public Safety" struck the Convention as being too revolutionary for the new situation, for it rejected,

[1] The Committee was short of six members: Hérault de Séchelles, Robespierre, Saint-Just, and Couthon, executed; Prieur (of Marne) and Jeanbon Saint-André, "on mission."

on the 18th of *Thermidor*, a motion of Cambon's, the object of which was to alter the name of the Committee of Public Safety to that of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Government. Again, on the 24th the Convention expressed with enthusiasm its intention of maintaining the Revolutionary Government. The Convention had a more or less conscious idea that it was time, now that the *public safety* of the interior was assured, to restrain the functions of the Committee, confining it to the departments of war and diplomacy, in which the *public safety* was not yet entirely assured. It appointed a special commission to study afresh the question of the organisation of the Committees. Berlier, the reporter, presented, on the 26th, a proposal which, after eleven days' discussion, was adopted without essential modification (on the 7th of *Fructidor*), and which was, so to speak, the provisional political Constitution of the period known as Thermidorian, as the decree of the 14th of *Frimaire* had been the provisional political Constitution of the period known as Terrorist.

In place of the twenty-one Committees of the Convention as it then was (the list may be found in the National Almanac of the year II, p. 103), the decree of the 7th of *Fructidor* established sixteen Committees, the list being as follows: 1. Public Safety. 2. General Security. 3. Finance. 4. Legislation. 5. Public Instruction. 6. Agriculture and Arts. 7. Commerce and Provisioning. 8. Public Works. 9. Transports, Posts, and Stages. 10. Military. 11. Marine and Colonies. 12. Public Relief. 13. Division (this Committee of Division supervised all that concerned the *division* of France into departments, districts, communes, the elections of administrators, &c.). 14. *Procès-verbaux*, Decrees, and Archives. 15. Petitions, Correspondence, and Despatches. 16. Inspectors of the National Palace.

The exercise of the executive power, hitherto under

the name of "supervision," confided to the Committee of Public Safety, assisted by the Committee of General Security in matters of police, was now distributed among the Committees just enumerated, or at least among the first thirteen, the last three dealing only with the internal activity of the Convention.

This partition of the executive was emphasised by the fact that each of the Committees was enabled to form resolutions on its own account which carried executive force. "The Executive Commissions account to the Committees and give them full instructions relating to the matters under their supervision." "The Committees have an immediate authority, each in its own province, over the judicial and administrative bodies, in respect of the execution of their decrees." The correspondence of these bodies with the Committees had "to be undertaken with the exactitude prescribed by the law of the 14th of *Frimaire*, the execution of which is maintained in all cases which are not contrary to the present decree." The Committees could dismiss officials.

The most remarkable novelty, the greatest change, was that the functions of the Minister of the Interior were transferred from the Committee of Public Safety to the Committee of Legislation, which at the same time received the attributes of the Minister of Justice, and had, according to the terms of the decree, the duty of "the supervision of the civil administrations and of the tribunals." These very important powers were quickly increased. On the 7th of *Vendémiaire* of the year III a decree ordered the completion of the constituted authorities, administrations, tribunals, &c. The Convention was to make all appointments to the vacant places in the department of Paris upon the recommendation of the Committee of Legislation. In other departments the deputy-commissioner, should one be present, was to make such appointments. If no

deputy-commissioner was present "on mission," the departmental deputies were to meet before the Committee of Legislation in order to draw up a list of candidates, from which the Convention would appoint the officials. But these nominations, the lists of which fill the *procès-verbaux*, wasted much of the Convention's time. The Convention finally, on the 14th of *Ventôse*, decreed that it would no longer deal with the matter, and that thenceforward the Committee of Legislation was "authorised to nominate municipal officers, administrative officials, and members of tribunals." Thus it was the Committee of Legislation that appointed the majority of the nation's officials and functionaries. It thus became one of the most important and powerful of the Committees.[1]

As for the Committee of Public Safety, it received the attributions of the Minister of War and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, with 10 millions for secret expenses. On the 27th of *Ventôse* in the year III, at the moment of the negotiations with Spain and Prussia, the Convention conferred upon it such diplomatic powers as

[1] It would be interesting to give here the statistics of the composition of the Committee of Legislation during the Thermidorian period. But the *procès-verbal* of the Convention does not give us all the lists of those who *entered* at each partial renewal, and never the names of those who left. Two cases in the National Archives, D III, 380 and 381, contain some *procès-verbaux* and some ordinary resolutions, with signatures. From these various documents it appears that this Committee, in *Vendémiaire* and *Brumaire* of the year III, was presided over by Cambacérès; in *Pluviôse* of the year III, by Merlin (of Douai). According to the National Almanac of the year III (p. 125), at a period which we must place between the 15th of *Vendémiaire* and the 15th of *Brumaire*, the Committee was composed of the following 16 members: Cambacérès, Pons (Verdun), Florent Guiot, Oudot, Bar, Hentz, Garran-Coulon, Durand-Maillane, Louvet (Somme), Azéma, Pérès, Le Maillaud, Porcher, Beauchamp, Pépin, Alexandre David. Shortly afterwards their number was increased to at least 18; for in D III 381 there is an order of the 6th of *Frimaire* signed by 18 hands. It does not appear that any of the members of the Committee of Legislation had, in this Committee, a lasting and preponderating influence.

one may call royal. Not only did it negotiate treaties, but it decreed the conditions. Among these conditions, those which were to be public would be ratified by the Convention; those which were to be secret would be executed without ratification.

The Committee of General Security, whose members had played a preponderating part the 9th of *Thermidor*, found its powers increased. It dealt with the general police of the Republic, the right to issue writs of arrest, the right to liberate incarcerated persons, and the disposition of 300,000 livres of secret funds. "It has the particular and immediate care of the Parisian police. It can requisition the armed forces in order to execute its orders." Later, on the 24th of *Ventôse*, it received the right to nominate the commissaries of police throughout the Republic.

The decree of the 11th of *Thermidor*, inasmuch as it prescribed the monthly renewal of one-quarter of the members of the Committees, was definitely maintained, and it was decreed that the quarter leaving should be chosen first by lot, then by seniority. But the Committees of Public Safety and General Security were the object of special precautions in order that no lasting personal influence should be established; the members of these two Committees were to be nominated by the roll-call, and could not "be elected members of the other, nor re-elected to the same," sooner than one month after their resignation.[1] With regard to the other Committees, the nominations were

[1] Here is the list of the members of the Committee of General Security after the 9th of *Thermidor*. On the 14th of *Thermidor* replacement and addition brought the number of members to 13, namely: Vadier, Amar, Rühl, Voulland, Moyse Bayle, Dubarran, Louis (Bas-Rhin), Elie Lacoste, Bernard (Saintes), Merlin (Thionville), Goupilleau (Fontenay), André Dumont, Legendre (Paris). The decree of the 7th of *Fructidor* having increased the number to 16, 7 new members were appointed, of whom 4 replaced Voulland, Elie Lacoste, Vadier, and Moyse Bayle; and these 7 members were: Collombel, Clauzel,

effected by the signed scrutiny, and the members on leaving were re-eligible without any interval.

It was a serious inconvenience, this incessant fluidity of the personality of the Committee of Public Safety; especially in respect of military and diplomatic affairs.

On the 15th of *Fructidor* of the year II, at the time of the first renewal, the lot fell to Barère, Robert Lindet, and Carnot as the first to leave. It seemed impossible

Lesage-Senault, Bourdon (Oise), Méaulle, Mathieu, Monmayou. On the 16th of *Fructidor* Rühl, resigning, was replaced by Levasseur (Meurthe). 15th of *Vendémiaire*, year III. Leaving: Amar, Dubarran, Louis (Bas-Rhin), Bernard (Saintes). Entering: Séb. de Laporte, Reubell, Reverchon, Bentabole. 15th of *Brumaire*. Leaving: Merlin, (Thionville), Goupilleau (Fontenay), André Dumont, Legendre (Paris). Entering: Laignelot, Barras, Harmand (Meuse), Garnier (Aube). 15th of *Frimaire*. Leaving: Collombel, Levasseur (Meurthe), Clauzel, Lesage-Senault. Entering: Legendre (Paris), Goupilleau (Montaigu), Boudin, Lomont. 15th of *Nivôse*. Leaving: Bourdon (Oise), Méaulle, Mathieu, Monmayou. Entering: Clauzel, Rovère, Guffroy, Vardon. 15th of *Pluviôse*. Leaving: Séb. de Laporte, Reubell, Reverchon, Bentabole. Entering: Calès, Gauthier (Ain), Mathieu, Auguis, Perrin (Vosges), Boudin. 15th of *Ventôse*. Leaving: Laignelot, Barras, Harmand (Meuse), Garnier (Aube). Two other members withdrew: Vardon, Bourdon (Oise). Entering: Pémartin, Delecloy, Monmayou, Ysabeau. 15th of *Germinal*. Leaving: Legendre, Goupilleau, Boudin, Lomont. Entering: Thibaudeau, M. J. Chénier, Courtois, Sevestre. 15th of *Floréal*. Leaving: Thibaudeau (resigns), Clauzel, Guffroy, Rovère. Entering: Kervélégan, Guyomar, Bergoeing, Pierret. 15th of *Prairial*. Leaving: Mathieu, Auguis, Perrin (Vosges), Delecloy. Entering: Genevois, Lomont, Rovère, Boudin. 15th of *Messidor*. Leaving: Monmayou, Ysabeau, Gauthier (Ain), Calés, Pémartin (5 instead of 4; doubtless some one resigned). Entering: Delaunay, junr., Perrin (Vosges), Bailleul, Bailly, Mariette. 15th of *Thermidor*. Leaving: M. J. Chénier, Courtois, Sevestre, Genevois (the last resigning). Entering: Calés, Pémartin, Gauthier (Ain), Ysabeau. 15th of *Fructidor*. Leaving: Kervélégan, Guyomar, Bergoeing, Pierret, Perrin (Vosges), (5 instead of 4). Entering: Quirot, Collombel, Hardy, Monmayou. 15th of *Vendémiaire*, year IV. Leaving: Lomont, Rovère, Boudin, Mariette. Entering: Guyomar, Bordas, Roberjot, Kervélégan (see, in the review *La Révolution français*, August to September, 1900, the article by M. J. Guillaume on "*Le Personnel du Comité de sûreté générale*").

to dispense with the services of Carnot, and the Convention immediately sought to repair the mischief which this hazard, which the Convention itself had provoked, was likely to cause the national defences. It happened that Billaud-Varenne and Collot d'Herbois had resigned. The Convention decreed that these two should be counted as having been excluded by lot, and that the three members really excluded by lot should draw lots finally, among themselves, as to which of them should leave. The lot then fell to Barère, who left. Robert Lindet and Carnot thus remained. Tallien having also resigned, there were four places vacant, and the Convention appointed Delmas, Cochon, Merlin (Douai), and Fourcroy. On the 15th of *Vendémiaire* of the year III, Carnot left by seniority, with Robert Lindet and Prieur (Côte-d'Or). This time the Convention had to resign itself to the loss of Carnot, and the Convention appointed Prieur (Marne), Guyton-Morveau, and Richard. But Carnot continued sedulously to direct the operations of the war, and to draw up resolutions. On the 15th of *Brumaire* the Convention made him re-enter the Committee, and at the same time appointed Cambacérès and Pelet (of Lozère), replacing Laloy, d'Eschassériaux, and Treilhard. Carnot did not leave finally till the 15th of *Ventôse* of the year III.[1]

[1] Here is the list of further changes in the *personnel* of the Committee of Public Safety. 15th of *Frimaire*, year III. Leaving: Bréard, Thuriot, Cochon. Entering: Boissy d'Anglas, Dubois-Crancé, André Dumont. 15th of *Nivôse*. Leaving: Delmas, Fourcroy, Merlin (Douai). Entering: Bréard, Marec, Chazal. 15th of *Pluviôse*. Leaving: Prieur (Marne), Guyton-Morveau, Richard. Entering: Merlin (Douai), Fourcroy, Lacombe Saint-Michel. 15th of *Ventôse*. Leaving: Cambacérès, Carnot, Pelet (Lozère). Entering: Siéyès, Séb. de Laporte, Reubell. 15th of *Germinal*. Leaving: Boissy d'Anglas, Dubois-Crancé, André Dumont. Entering: Cambacérès, Creuzé-Latouche, Gillet, Aubry, Roux (Haute-Marne), Lesage (Eure-et-Loir), Tallien (7 members were named instead of 3, because a decree of the day before, the 14th of *Germinal*, had increased the number of the

The Convention attempted not only by the above means, and in one case only, to remedy in practice the instability of personal government which it had itself established; it also tried to re-establish a kind of unity of government, by modifying its decree of the 7th of *Fructidor*. On the 7th of *Floréal* of the year III, Thibaudeau denounced from the tribune the anarchical effects of this decree, in consequence of which thirteen Committees formed as many governments. He proposed to confide the whole executive power to the Committee of Public Safety, until the Constitution was put into operation. Daunou, on the 15th *Floréal*, made a report on this proposition and came to almost the same conclusion, but advised the conjunction of the Committee of General Security and the Committee of Public Safety for purposes of government. The Convention, after a long debate, inclined to a proposition of Cambacérès which appeared less radical, and passed, on the 21st, the following decree:

"1. The attributions given to the various Committees by the law of the 7th of *Fructidor* are maintained, and this law will continue in execution in all respects except where modified by the present decree.

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members from 14 to 16; at each partial renewal there were thenceforward 4 leaving and 4 entering). 15th of *Floréal*. Leaving: Bréard, Marec, Chazal, Lesage (Eure-et-Loir) and Creuzé-Latouche (5 instead of 4, because there were two resignations). Entering: Treilhard, Vernier, Defermon, Doulcet de Pontécoulant, Rabaut-Pomier. 15th of *Prairial*. Leaving: Merlin (Douai), Fourcroy, Lacombe Saint-Michel, Séb. de Laporte. Entering: Henry-Larivière, Gamon, Marec, Blad. 15th of *Messidor*. Leaving: Siéyès, Reubell, Gillet, Roux. Entering: Boissy d'Anglas, Louvet (Loiret), Jean de Bry, Lesage (Eure-et-Loir). 15th of *Thermidor*. Leaving: Cambacérès, Aubry, Tallien, Treilhard. Entering: Merlin (Douai), Le Tourneur (Manche), Reubell, Siéyès. 15th of *Fructidor*. Leaving: Vernier, Defermon, Doulcet de Pontécoulant, Rabaut-Pomier. Entering: Cambacérès, Daunou, La Revellière-Lépeaux, Berlier. 15th of *Vendémiaire*, year IV. Leaving: Henry-Larivière, Gamon, Marec, Blad. Entering: M. J. Chénier, Gourdan, Eschassériaux, Thibaudeau.

(2) The Committee of Public Safety alone will take such resolutions as relate to executive measures dealing with matters which constitute its actual province ; the Committees which were entrusted with such measures will retain the right of proposing laws upon the same subjects. (3) All expenditures will be prescribed by the Committees of Public Safety and Finance, combined in one section formed of three members of each Committee. (4) The meetings of the Committees will only take place in future by the sending of four commissaries to the Committee of Public Safety by each of the Committees desirous of deliberating with it. The Committee of General Security, however, will meet in full in all cases. (5) The Committee of Public Safety will be divided into sections, each of which undertake separately the correspondence and supervision of the Executive Commissions in those cases in which the attributions of the Committee authorise it to take executive measures. The Committee will present, with the least possible delay, the plan of its organisation, and a project for arranging the Executive Commissions, so that they shall correspond to the various sections of the Committee of Public Safety."

In this way the Committee of Public Safety resumed its old supremacy in all matters of grave importance, since in all such circumstances the Convention referred to several united Committees the examination of projected measures ; and at such meetings the Committee of Public Safety exercised the presidency. We see, for example, that in *Brumaire* of the year III the question of closing the Jacobins was referred to the four Committees of Public Safety, General Security, Military, and Legislative matters. On the 14th of *Fructidor* of the year II, during the commotion caused by the explosion of the powder-magazine of Grenelle, the Convention conferred on the Committee of Public Safety the right to requisition the troops. A year later we see the same Committee entrusted with a mandate which in the decree of the 7th of *Fructidor* was hardly foreseen ; namely, the duty of provisioning the city of Paris ; and on the 27th of *Thermidor* of the year III it passed a resolution ordering the distribution of provisions of the first necessity to the citizens of Paris. But the continuity and unity of the Govern-

ment were never really recovered during the whole Thermidorian period, except in the Executive Commissions. We have seen that these twelve Commissions had replaced (according to the decree of the 12th of *Germinal*) the six Ministries which formed the provisional Executive Council. This decree definitely enacted that they were "subordinated" to the Committee of Public Safety. The decree of the 7th of *Fructidor* terminated this subordination. Each Commission had to "render account," "give notice," to the corresponding Committee. The "subordination" of the Commissions to the Committees was no longer proclaimed, but indicated (as if, had the circumstances become less abnormal, the principle of the separation of powers would have been resumed). In actual fact the subordination existed for some time; but little by little, especially after the peace of Basle, the Commissions, without becoming independent of the Committees, developed a greater initiative, and the commissaries behaved like ministers; the more so as a decree of the 26th of *Thermidor* had placed very considerable funds at the disposition of several of the Commissions (1 million in the case of the Commission of Civil Administration; 100 millions went to the Commission of Commerce; 20 millions to that of Public Assistance; 7 millions to that of Public Works; 37 millions to that of Transports and Posts; 3 millions to that of National Revenues; 15 millions to that of the Marine). Permanent, as contrasted with the Committees, which were incessantly changing, inheritors of the governmental tradition, the Commissions played the more important part; and although there was no discord, there was no longer, between the operations of the Committees and Commissions, the harmony and cohesion which alone might have assured the unity, not of the Government in general, since a law had parcelled out the Government, but at least of each division of the Government.

The decree of the 7th of *Fructidor* had maintained the centralisation of the Government as it had been established by the decree of the 14th of *Frimaire;* that is, the local authorities remained strictly subordinated to the central power, which had throughout the provinces its executive or national agents. The departmental assemblies were progressively annihilated, their duties reduced to insignificance : both to punish their attempts at Federalism, and to ensure that they should not re-commence such attempts. This annihilation of the departmental assemblies was one of the most important results of the triumph of the Montagnard over the Girondist policy; that is to say, of the policy which was striving, with a view to the success of the national defence, to unify France under the almost dictatorial rule of Paris, against the policy which endeavoured, as though circumstances had been normal, to reduce Paris, according to Lasource's phrase, to her eighty-third portion of influence. The central power, supported by the Commune of Paris, and governing France through the communes, with the districts as intermediaries, was the essential mainspring of this centralisation. It was maintained after *Thermidor*, except as regards the Commune of Paris, but only for a few months. When the peace had been concluded with Prussia and Spain, and there was a hope of general pacification, and a return to normal circumstances, the Girondists, recalled to the Convention, obtained the passage of a decree (of the 28th of *Germinal*, year III), which restored to the departmental administrations (and to district administrations also), "the functions which were delegated to them by the law anterior to May 31, 1793." The procurator-general-syndics were re-established, as well as the directories, whose members were nominated either by the deputy-commissioners or by the Committee of Legislation. The directories had to render an account,

every tenth day, to the Committee of General Security, "of the proceedings taken to ensure the execution of the laws, and especially those relating to *émigrés*, refractory priests, and the free exercise of religion."

The anti-Montagnard measure of decentralisation was not merely voted, but was actually applied. There were departmental administrations which at first could hardly believe that they were now re-invested with all the functions which had formerly been bestowed upon them by the Constituent Assembly. For example, had they really the right to suspend municipal officers according to the law of March 27, 1791? Interrogated on the subject, the Commission of Civil Administrations, Police, and Tribunals, having consulted the Committee of Legislation, addressed a circular, on the 3rd of *Messidor* of the year III, to the districts and departments, in order to assure them that they had this right, and must exercise it with vigilance.

The return to the old system, however, was not really complete. In the very decree which re-established the state of things in force before May 31, 1791, the Convention had enacted that while waiting for the Committee of Legislation to present "the list of those laws which must be repealed or modified, according to present intentions, the administrations and procurator-syndics of districts will fulfil, under the supervision of the departments, the new functions attributed to the districts and national agents by the decrees posterior to May 31, 1793." Thus the Convention restored to the departments the functions of which the decree of the 14th of *Frimaire* had despoiled them in favour of the districts, and at the same time the districts were provisionally left in possession of the same functions. Several departments asked for further information. Would the districts have the right of independent decision? Yes, replied the Commission of Civil Administration, on the advice of the Committee of Legislation ;

but " they must give notice of them to the departments, which must confine themselves to receiving such claims, and proposing the rectification of such errors as they may fall into ; except in cases where they insist on referring the matter to the superior authorities ; but with regard to other questions, they must limit themselves, as before, to giving advice." In reality, the districts provisionally retained the right of executing the revolutionary laws, concurrently with the departments, and this proviso, the source of much conflict and incoherence, lasted as long as the Revolutionary Government ; that is, until the application of the Constitution of the year III. The decentralising decree of the 28th of *Germinal* would, had its application lasted long enough, have led to a kind of administrative anarchy.

Such was the governmental and administrative system which was established by the notable decree of the 7th of *Fructidor* of the year II, and by certain other provisional decrees. The executive power was without unity or stability ; the departmental assemblies were in confusion, and conflicted with the power of the districts ; and this crumbling of the executive, this anarchy established out of hatred for Robespierrism and the Montagnard policy, all constituted a Government which was, one would say, incapable of holding together or of doing business. There was, however, one common centre, one form of unity ; the National Convention. Before *Thermidor* we may say that it was governed. After *Thermidor* we may say that it governed itself, by successive majorities ; first, and for some days, by a Montagnard majority ; then, and during all the year III, by an anti-Montagnard majority ; finally, after the 13th of *Vendémiaire*, by an anti-royalist majority provisionally allied to the remnants of the Montagnard party. These successive tendencies or opinions, created by circumstances rather

than by theories, had leaders, orators, and a species of unofficial ministers, who wielded power turn by turn ; such as Tallien, Barras, Fréron, Durand-Maillane, Lanjuinais, Thibeaudeau, and M. J. Chénier, who directed the general progress of the Government. In this way the vices and contradictions of the political system were corrected by practice, and the Revolutionary Government, dislocated and enfeebled, nevertheless fulfilled its duties and administered effectively, with a certain success, the internal and external affairs of France until the coming of the Directory.

## IV.

Hitherto I have spoken only of the executive power properly so-called ; of the Committees, Executive Commissions, and local administrations. Let us pass on to the other members of the Revolutionary Government.

The institution of missionary-representatives was already in a state of decadence at the moment of Robespierre's fall, inasmuch as for some months, since the installation of national agents, the Committee of Public Safety had abandoned the administration of France through the members of the Convention. The majority of these ambulant prefects had been recalled ; and no more were sent out, except for special objects.

But the representatives with the armies were as numerous as ever, and exercised the same powers. Many had been " on mission " for a very long time ; and the Thermidorians affected to see a species of pro-consul in those whom they suspected of Robespierrism.

The Convention decreed (on the 26th of *Thermidor* of the year II) that the missions of the representatives must not last more than six months when to the armies ; nor more than three when to the departments ; which resulted, without the necessity of personal orders, in

the recall of the majority of them. On the 12th of *Fructidor* following, the Convention decreed the recall of all representatives from the departments; and, always anxious to prevent the establishment of any personal preponderance whatsoever, it decided simultaneously that the representatives recalled could not be sent out again in less than three months' time.

The Convention sent out to the armies deputies furnished with the same powers as before, and playing the same parts as before; then, on the 18th of *Floréal* in the year III, it restrained these powers in the matter of the right to appoint to military employments. It also sent, but only by exception, a few representatives into the departments; chiefly to deal severely with the democratic republicans, who were lumped together and vaguely called Terrorists. The missions of Isnard, Cadroy, Chambon, and Mariette, in the south-east, resulted in the reign of the White Terror.

It was not the Committee of Public Safety that despatched the deputy-commissioners; the Convention itself appointed them. However, on the 14th of *Floréal* of the year III it authorised the Committee, in very urgent cases, to entrust some particular mission to one or two of its members.

To sum up: the institution of representatives "on mission" remained more or less as it was before the 9th of *Thermidor;* and among the provisional institutions of which the Revolutionary Government was then composed, this was the only one which at that time received scarcely any essential modification.

We have seen that the Revolutionary Government also operated through the people's clubs and Revolutionary Committees.

Although the Jacobin Club had been so largely on Robespierre's side, the Thermidorians had at first no idea of destroying it. They wished to make an alliance with the mother club, and, through that, to win over the affiliated societies to the anti-Robespierre policy.

On the 10th of *Thermidor*, Legendre had closed the hall of the Jacobins and had carried the keys to the Convention. On the 11th the Committee of Public Safety authorised the re-opening of the hall, "in order that the sessions of the true Jacobins may proceed." The "true Jacobins" were the Thermidorian minority in the club. The club sat immediately; and recalled to its midst the adversaries of Robespierre, formerly excluded, such as Thuriot, Dubois-Crancé, Fouché, Coupé (Oise), and Tallien. It named an expurgatory commission, which eliminated all Robespierrists.

When the Thermidorians became disunited the Jacobins took the part of the Democrats and began an opposition campaign against the majority in the Convention; Billaud-Varenne was one of its most ardent leaders. The "Dandies," the gilded youth of Fréron, insulted the Jacobins with impunity. Merlin (of Thionville), before the Convention, demanded the closing of this "haunt of brigands."

On the 25th of *Vendémiaire* of the year III, the Convention struck a mortal blow at the influence of the mother society throughout France; by prohibiting, as subversive of the Government and contrary to the unity of the Republic, all affiliations, aggregations, federations, as well as all correspondence of a collective kind, between such clubs and federations. It declared that henceforth no petitions or addresses could be made under a collective title: that they must be individually signed. This was to break the entire Jacobin organisation. The Jacobins protested, and bitterly denounced the re-awakening royalism of their enemies. Billaud-Varenne, from the tribune of the club (the 13th of *Brumaire* of the year III), threatened the reactionaries with the anger of the people. "The lion," he said, "is not dead when he slumbers, and when he wakes he exterminates all his enemies." On the 19th of *Brumaire* the "Dandies" appeared, and besieged the Jacobins

throughout their session, threw stones in at the windows and, on their exit, beat them. On the 21st there was a similar attack. This time the troops protected the Jacobins. But the Committees of Public Safety, of General Security, and of Military and Legislative Affairs united, had the hall closed again on the night of the 21st, and the Convention confirmed this measure by decreeing (on the 22nd of *Brumaire*) that "the sessions of the Society of Jacobins in Paris are suspended." The Jacobin Club had run its course.

Many provincial "people's clubs" also disappeared at this period; some spontaneously, some by order of the deputy-commissioners. Those which survived for the most part led but an insignificant existence.

These Societies no longer played their part in the Revolutionary Government, of which they had formerly been one of the most active organs. Exciting and regulating public opinion, they had created the moral unity of the new France, and, by this unity, aroused its independence. It seems as if they were too wholly dispossessed of their mission. From the moment they were silenced there were no more of those waves of national opinion which had produced such great results. Public opinion became divided and uncertain. Republican France was no longer able to make those simultaneous and powerful efforts of will with which she had astonished the world.

On the 6th of *Fructidor* of the year III, in the name of the United Committees of Public Safety, of General Security, and of Legislation, Mailhe read a report on the "remnants of the so-called Popular Societies." "There are those," he said, "who are still meditating the crimes and the outrages of the Terror; there are those who are sharpening the daggers of royalty." The Jacobins, during the Revolution, had been as tyrannically privileged as the privileged classes of the *ancien régime*. "Let any one cite the case of a plebeian

who, in a struggle with a great lord, has not succumbed : let any one cite the case of a Republican who, struggling against a Jacobin, has not fallen." He also described them (but he would have been decidedly embarrassed to cite an instance in support of his assertion) as "erecting pillage into a precept, and openly preaching the agrarian law." They must therefore be suppressed. He obtained a decree to the effect that "all assemblies known under the name of *clubs* or *popular societies* are dissolved ; and in consequence the halls in which the aforesaid assemblies hold their sessions will be closed forthwith, and the keys thereof will be deposited, as well as the registers and papers, in the secretary's office of the communal buildings."

The Jacobin Clubs had been one of the elements of municipal life during the Terror ; one of the active factors of the centralising, unitarian, Montagnard policy. The other factor of this movement, the Revolutionary Committees, whose services, brutalities, and blunders we have related, survived the 9th of *Thermidor*, but with almost immediate modifications.

It was the committees of the villages and small towns which had appeared so tyrannical. The Convention suppressed them on the 7th of *Fructidor* of the year II. It decreed that there should be only one Revolutionary Committee in a district, and only 12 in Paris instead of 48. They were to be renewed by halves every three months, and the resigning members would not be re-eligible until three more months had elapsed. They would be nominated by the deputy-commissioners, or, in default of these, by the Committee of General Security. The writs of arrest issued by them would be signed by at least seven members. They were to send, within twenty-four hours, to the Committee of General Security, the records (*dossiers*) of the persons arrested. To sum up, not more than a few hundreds were left in all France, and they were no longer able to commit the

arbitrary acts which had made them so greatly feared and hated.

On the 1st of *Ventôse* of the year III, the Convention still further reduced the number; there were then none left except in communes of at least 50,000 inhabitants.

They lost their name of Revolutionary Committees by the decree of the following 24th of *Prairial*, which proclaimed that no constituted authority could take the name of *revolutionary*. They survived as long as the Convention; but few traces of their activity remain; and their members were violently persecuted by the general and ruling opinion. They were stigmatised in the theatre; and for a long time the public applauded a comedy, *The Revolutionary Committee from Inside; or, the Modern Aristides*, by Ducancel, in which these "terrorists" were hatefully caricatured. They were ill-treated in the streets; there were positive man-hunts. The tribunals condemned a number of them for malversation (but we have not the records of these trials); and, exposed publicly on the Place de Grève, they were the butt of savage insults. This persecution became so general and so violent that the Convention was bound to intervene; but only when it saw that the persecutors were inclining to royalism; a decree of the 21st of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV forbade all judges to pronounce any sentence upon the ex-members of the Revolutionary Committees.

## V.

If, in the Revolutionary Government, as it was modified after *Thermidor*, these two factors of the communal life, the Popular Societies and the Revolutionary Committees, gradually disappeared, the municipalities survived, and continued to play their part in the application of the Revolutionary Government, according to

the decree of the 14th of *Frimaire* of the year II; but this part was diminished by the re-establishment of the departmental assemblies, with their previous functions. In reality the Revolution lost the municipal character which it had assumed since July 14, 1789.

It was not only by the restoration of the departmental assemblies that it lost this character. If the Revolution had been accomplished by a federation of communes, that federation had only attained its result, the unification of the nation, by submitting to the presidency of Paris. Certainly the government of Robespierre, by appointing the mayor, the national agent, and part of the Parisian municipality, had deprived that municipality of its independence, and had made it one of the wheels of the machinery of the central power. But this commune, however greatly *robespierrisée*, seemed always to preside over the federation of the communes of France.

But one of the first acts of the Thermidorians was to break up the Commune of Paris. They sent to the scaffold those of its members who had sided with Robespierre: that is, nearly all. There was no longer a Municipality of Paris. The Committee of Public Safety and General Security confined themselves to appointing a few citizens who were provisionally to fulfil the functions of the administration of police (resolutions of the 9th and 27th of *Thermidor*). The rest of the administrative departments of Paris they undertook themselves. On the 14th of *Fructidor* of the year II the Convention organised the following provisional system. It established, so to speak, an embryo municipality, by the creation of two commissions, of which it appointed the members, which were entrusted the one with the administrative department of the municipal police, and the other with the assessment and distribution of the public taxes. The police commission had hardly any duties beyond making reports on the state of public

feeling, as the Committee of General Security exercised the functions of the prefect of police. The administrative functions relating to the civil state were to be exercised, according to this decree, by a special official established in each section.[1] The other departments and functions of the old Parisian municipality—provisioning, relief, public education, highways, workshops, houses of detention, &c., were entrusted to the Executive Commissions; which amounts to the fact that the Government itself administered the city of Paris. Paris remained the capital, but was no longer a commune.

Municipal life, however, did not entirely disappear from Paris. It took refuge in the assemblies of the sections, which still survived. Some, after the closing of the Jacobin Club, became the foci of the democratic Opposition. In these assemblies the insurrections of *Germinal* and *Prairial* of the year III were organised. The defeat of the democrats on those days of insurrection emptied the sectional assemblies. Then the moderates and the royalists in disguise filled the meetings, gained the upper hand, and began to prepare the insurrection which was frustrated on the 13th of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV. On the 17th the Convention prohibited the sectional assemblies. These various attempts on the part of Paris to recapture, by a sectional rising, its *rôle* of ruling capital, had radically miscarried, and France remained as insensible to the democratic appeals of the capital as to the demonstrations of the royalists. It was then that what is known as the Parisian dictatorship came to an end; not only as regards the Revolutionary Government, and for that period; but in the history of France until 1830.

[1] On the 21st of *Fructidor* the Commission of Police was instructed to regularise such acts of the civil state anterior to the 9th of *Thermidor* as had not been established in due and proper form.

## VI.

Among the municipal components of the Revolutionary Government there is one of which I have not yet spoken ; namely, the National Guard. The National Guard of Paris had in great crises been the most efficacious instrument of the Montagnard policy. It was the means by which the insurrection against the Girondists was effected, on May 31 and June 1, 1793. The dictatorship of Robespierre was apparently established by the same means, since the commandant-general, Hanriot, appeared at all times to be Robespierre's tool.

The Convention took measures at the outset to prevent the Guard from ever again becoming the instrument of a personal policy. By the decree of the 19th of *Thermidor* it destroyed the unity of the command. "There will no longer be a commandant-general or a *chef de légion* of the National Guard of Paris. The staff will be composed of five members, who will be appointed for ten days." Then five would be chosen by lot from among the commandants of the Guard of each section. The oldest of the five would command in chief during five days. But all orders would be signed by three members at least, and a register would be kept.

When the anti-Robespierrist reaction had extended to all the ex-Terrorists, that is to say to all the ex-Democrats, the National Guard was purged of its democratic elements. After the insurrections of *Germinal* and *Prairial*, which were incited by the National Guards of the sections, to obtain not only bread, but to put into full execution the Constitution of 1793, the Convention ordered and enforced the disarmament of those citizens suspected of "Terrorism," that is, the democratic Republicans were excluded from the National Guard. It also dispensed with the services in the Guard of "the poorer citizens of the artisan,

labourer, and journeyman classes " (Decree of the 10th of *Prairial*).

The National Guard became thenceforward an institution less popular than *bourgeois*, which in the hands of the central power gradually lost not only its character as a democratic force, but even up to a certain point its character as a municipal force.

## VII.

The history of the decay and abolition of the Revolutionary Tribunal after the 9th of *Thermidor* is more widely known. It will be remembered that the law of *Prairial* the 22nd of the year II converted this Tribunal into a fearful instrument of murder, by suppressing almost all the rights and all the forms of defence. If, upon Robespierre's overthrow, the immediate end of the Convention had been to destroy the rule of the Terror, would it not have abolished, immediately, the most essential Terrorist law? It waited four days, and when on the 14th of *Thermidor*, Le Cointre demanded the repeal of the law, it exhibited no unanimous movement in favour of his motion. Merlin (of Douai) made a jurist's technical objections. The debate was surprisingly long. Le Cointre had his way, and the law was forthwith repealed.

But every one intended to maintain the Tribunal. On the 9th of *Thermidor* it had sent to the scaffold yet another forty-six condemned prisoners ; this batch was known as *the last cartload*. On the 10th and 11th it had Robespierre and his followers guillotined. Then its activity was suspended until the end of the month. Why? Because men were ashamed of this tribunal of blood? No ; but because there were Robespierrists among its members. This is what Barère said in his report of the 11th :

"I should not have entirely performed the duty which the Committee has imposed on me, did I not speak to you of the Revolutionary Tribunal; of that salutary institution which destroys the enemies of the Republic and purges the soil of liberty; it weighs upon the aristocrats; it thwarts the ambitious; it clears aways intriguers and smites the counter-revolutionaries; it annihilates the hopes of tyranny. We must therefore conceive a great respect for this institution; but the men who compose it must have drawn upon themselves the criticism and inspection of the National Convention. Among your duties has been reckoned that of revising the formation of this tribunal; but with the wisdom that perfects without weakening, and reconstructs without destroying. Let us avoid all hasty measures, though inspired by the most useful motives; for such would be liable to awaken the plots of the wicked, or the sinister schemes of conspirators."

On the 23rd of *Thermidor* a decree reorganised the Revolutionary Tribunal, composed it of other judges, and made it a regular tribunal, except that it dealt with political affairs only and judged without appeal. Serious guarantees were allowed to the accused; and it was thus that Carrier and Fouquier-Tinville were able to defend themselves freely and for a long time; which neither Vergniaud nor Danton had been able to do. Modified further by the decree of the 8th of *Nivôse* of the year III, the Revolutionary Tribunal was not definitely suppressed until the following 12th of *Prairial*.

This Tribunal was, in the eyes of Europe, the very sign and principal means of the Terror. It was accordingly abolished when France had treated with a portion of Europe, and negotiations had been commenced for a general pacification.

As for the popular Commissions, which had been procurers to the Revolutionary Tribunal, they were not definitely suppressed. But as early as the 10th of *Thermidor* a decree instructed the Committees of Public Safety and of General Security to expurgate them, and they practically disappeared. The celebrated Commission d'Orange, established by Robespierre, was sus-

pended by order of the Committee of Public Safety, and did not reappear.

The Convention even went so far, after the peace of Basle, as to declare void (the 29th of *Thermidor* of the year III) "all judgments given in a revolutionary manner between March 10, 1793, and the 8th of *Nivôse* of the year III of the Republic against persons now living, whether involving corporal or degrading punishments, detention, or imprisonment."

On the 18th of *Fructidor* of the year II the law of the 27th of *Germinal* was repealed, which forbade ex-nobles to sojourn in military or maritime places.[1]

The Girondists were recalled, the insurrection of May 31st was disowned, the measures taken against federalism were revoked, by the decrees of 18th and 27th of *Frimaire*, the 18th of *Ventôse*, the 22nd of *Germinal*, and the 22nd of *Prairial* of the year III. The Revolutionary Government ceased entirely to be Montagnard in order to become Girondist.

On the 3rd of *Nivôse* of the year III the maximum was abolished. But requisitions continued, such as placing the means of life in common, and we still find, here and there, by reason of the continuation of the conditions of wartime which had formed them in the year II, provisional collectivist cities of the kind I have already described; then these disappeared, and all things passed into a state of preparation for a more normal social and political life.

## VIII.

What still further weakened the vitality of the Revolutionary Government was not the modification or

[1] At the outset of the Thermidorian period the Convention had appeared rather disposed to aggravate this law. On the 15th of *Thermidor* of the year II, it had decreed that nobles and priests should be excluded from all public functions. But it repealed this the following day.

abolition of certain components of that Government, but the return of a modified liberty of the press.

Legally maintained, this liberty had been suspended in actual fact since August 10th, by the laws bearing generally upon whosoever should express royalist opinions; or those tending to the agrarian law, or simply hostile to the Government.

On the 2nd of *Fructidor* of the year II Tallien demanded of the Convention *the liberty of the press or death*. No decree was issued; but the liberty in question was resumed by the journals, moderate, anti-democratic, or disguisedly royalist. The democratic journalists found themselves reduced to silence, or at least compelled to a prudent dissimulation of their ideas, on account of the great unpopularity of the men and the ideas of the period anterior to the 9th of *Thermidor*. The anti-democratic journalists, strong in numbers, upheld by public opinion, attacked, with impunity, first the Terror, then the Revolutionary Government, and finally the very principles of the Revolution.

There was, however, a legal limit to this liberty of one portion of the press. The Convention would allow no one openly to demand the re-establishment of royalty (see the law of the 12th of *Floréal*, year III). It had soon passed, in order to suppress the royalist spirit, a law which might well be called terrorist; that of the 21st of *Nivôse* of the year III, by which it established an annual national festival to celebrate the anniversary of the execution of Louis XVI. This festival, which was actually celebrated, and celebrated with success, may be considered as a new element, added to the Revolutionary Government after *Thermidor*, with a view to re-inforcing it; while the other elements of this Government were enfeebled or abolished.

## IX.

It results from these facts that the Revolutionary Government was most certainly maintained by the Convention after *Thermidor*, and until the Constitution of the year III was put into execution; and that the famous decree of the 14th of *Frimaire* of the year II, gradually modified according to circumstances, remained, during the whole Thermidorian period, the political law of France. The Convention, victorious over its external enemies, was determined that the Government should be neither Robespierrist nor Terrorist after the old fashion; and in the enthusiasm of its struggle against Robespierre and the Jacobin Terrorism, it was led to the partial destruction of the democratic character of the Government.

We have already observed that the decadence of the Revolutionary Government was no longer provoked by a preconceived theory that its formation and development had not been determined by a philosophical system. Circumstances (in other words, military disasters) had created this provisional system of government; other circumstances (military successes) abolished it.

We have seen, however, that the word *expedient* does not give a precise or complete idea of the Revolutionary Government. It was, to be sure, a provisional structure, created for temporary conditions; but a structure into which was built, by its creators, consciously or unconsciously, thoughts of the future, and elements of the permanent normal State of the future, which was to have been a democratic State. At the same time, when the edifice of the Revolutionary Government was little by little destroyed, it was again necessary to prepare for the future; but for a different future and another State; a permanent Republic, which was not to be democratic, but *bourgeois;* the State, in short, that was organised by the Constitution of the year III.

We have seen that the Thermidorians had suspended the exercise of the electoral rights of the French people. In Robespierre's time, certainly, these rights had already been suspended ; since the citizens, with some exceptions, were no longer convoked, according to law, for the renewal or completion of the various administrations. Since the 14th of *Frimaire* of the year II all functionaries had been actually appointed by the deputy-commissioners, the Committee of Public Safety, or the National Convention. These appointments had always been made with the concurrence of the people assembled in the people's clubs ; an illusory concurrence, if you will, but none the less one that constituted a kind of homage to the principle of popular sovereignty. This concurrence and this homage disappeared after the 9th of *Thermidor*. As a rule the central power proceeded to fill the various appointments without maintaining even the pretence of a popular election. This system, to be sure, was announced as merely provisional ; but when, from the military and diplomatic points of view, the military situation of France had become thoroughly satisfactory, and the deputy Laurence, on the 14th of *Ventôse* of the year III, proposed to restore the right of appointing officials to the people, the Convention turned a deaf ear, and confined itself to referring the motion to the Committee entrusted with the preparation of the foundations of a new Constitution. For a long time, as a matter of fact, there had been nothing democratic in the application of the Revolutionary Government ; and the Thermidorians had already accustomed France to the gradual decline of democracy when they finally suppressed it legally by the Constitution of the year III. The anti-democratic changes brought about by the Government were preparing the way for the *bourgeois* Republic.

## CHAPTER VII

### OPINIONS, PARTIES, AND THE RELIGIOUS POLICY

I. Thermidorians of the Left and the Right. Return of the Girondists. —II. Changes in Manners.—III. Reaction against the Terror and the Terrorists.—IV. The insurrection of *Germinal* and *Prairial*.—V. The White Terror.—VI. Royalism. The 13th of *Vendémiaire*.— VII. The religious policy. Separation of Church and State.

### I.

THE examination which we have just made of the decadence of the Revolutionary Government has already shown us the opinions and the parties of the time in some of their vicissitudes. We have seen Robespierre overthrown by a coalition of the Montagnards and the Moderates, who reproached him, the former for seeking to arrest the Terror and the latter for seeking to push it too far. This coalition quickly divided itself into the Thermidorians of the Left, such as Barère, Collot d'Herbois, and Billaud-Varenne, who wished to maintain the old supremacy of the Committee of Public Safety, and the Thermidorians of the Right, such as Barras, Tallien, and Fréron, who, without being then royalists, had placed themselves at the head of the "gilded youth" and the "Dandies" in order to destroy the influence of the ex-Terrorists. Carnot and Robert Lindet, apparently, sought to rise above these quarrels, to play the part of arbiters, and establish a liberal

Republic. The "Marsh," so long voiceless, demanded (on the 4th of *Fructidor*) through the medium of Durand-Maillane, the right of sharing in the conduct of public affairs.[1] All the Moderates allied themselves against the ex-members of the governing Committees, who were denounced by Laurent Le Cointre, on the 12th of *Fructidor*, as accomplices of Robespierre. The Convention declared this denunciation to be calumnious; but those who had been its object felt themselves to be in danger. The Jacobins took their part openly. There was a kind of reconciliation, of which the *panthéonisation* of Marat was the outward sign (the 5th *sans-culottide* of the year II—September 21, 1794). The ashes of Jean-Jacques Rousseau were also carried to the Panthéon (on the 20th of *Vendémiaire* of the year III). Then the intestine quarrels recommenced. Men called each other, respectively, blood-drinkers and royalists. It is undeniable that the Jacobins welcomed and made much of Carrier and the worst of the Terrorists. It is equally certain that the Moderates excited the royalist youth of Paris, armed with cudgels, against their adversaries. But the Thermidorians of the Left did not wish to bring back the Terror, nor did those of the Right at that time seek to restore the monarchy. At heart, but perhaps without realising it at the time, the former wished to maintain the democratic Republic, while the latter inclined towards the *bourgeois* Republic. These tendencies became more clearly defined at the time of the debates on the Constitution, as we shall presently see; but at the beginning

[1] See *Motion d'ordre sur la liberté des opinions et des suffrages*, by Durand-Maillane. He demanded a law which should permit members of the Right and the Moderates to speak from the Tribune without molestation. He says: "There is not one of those who have been singled out, with a great deal of affectation, as being of the Right, or Moderates—there is not a man of all these, and I know them well, who has not in his heart the energy of a true republican."

of the year III they were vague. Two parties can plainly be distinguished, which abused one another; but we cannot distinguish two different programmes, since all at that time called themselves Democratic Republicans.

The Thermidorians of the Right were quickly reinforced by the return upon the scene of the survivors of the Gironde. The less definitely compromised of the Girondists, the Seventy-five (vulgarly called the Seventy-three), those, namely, who had signed the protests against the insurrections of May 31st and June 2nd, were the first to be recalled, consequently upon a report of Merlin's (of Douai) on the 18th of *Frimaire* of the year III (December 8, 1794). The others, those who had been outlawed for having fomented the civil war in the departments—such as Isnard, Louvet, and Lanjuinais—were recalled on the 18th of *Ventôse* following (March 8, 1795), and the Convention revoked the decree by which it had formerly established a festival commemorative of the insurrection of May 31st. The Girondists, upon their turn, undertook to forget the ills they had suffered and all idea of vengeance. They did not wholly keep their promise. Many of them had become royalists; and their return led to an aggravation of the reaction.

## II.

It was at this period that people began to be ashamed of democratic ideas and democratic methods. The spadework of the *bourgeois* Republic was done in the *salons*, under the influence of such women as Mme. Tallien, Mme. de Staël, and Mme. Récamier.[1] Some of the *salons* of the old nobility were also reopened.

[1] During the Thermidorian reaction there was a certain amount of luxury, and the prodigality of enriched contractors. Was there also as great a corruption of manners as has since been stated and believed? No contemporary documents indicate any general alteration of the

"It was not on account of their personal merit," says the deputy Thibaudeau in his memoirs, "nor for the pleasure they gave, that the revolutionaries were invited; they were feasted and made much of only in order to obtain their services or corrupt their opinions. To their faces, they were overwhelmed with all manner of seductions; behind their backs, they were derided; it was all in the day's work. But there were many who did not see this; they thought to add to their importance and consideration by frequenting the rooms of these people of the old *régime*, and allowed themselves to be snared by these deceitful allurements. Before their faces their hostesses would indulge in a few pleasantries concerning the Revolution. How could they show their annoyance? The jester was a pretty woman. Their republicanism could not stand out against the fear of giving displeasure or of appearing ridiculous. After they had been tamed and broken in to persiflage, they were insensibly accustomed to despise the revolutionary institutions."

This was also the period when the "gilded youth," the "Dandies," the *Incroyables*, gave the "Victims' Balls," to which no one was admitted unless some relative had been guillotined. They wore their hair *à la victime*, and carried great cudgels, with which they beat the Jacobins in the theatre, in the café, in the street. Fréron, Tallien, and Barras encouraged them. They dared not demand the return of the King, and cries of "*Vive le roi!*" were at that time very rarely heard from the crowds. People cried, "*Down with the Jacobins!*" "*Down with the anarchists!*" and sang the *Réveil du peuple*, which was not a royalist song, but one which the royalists had adopted; and the republicans replied with the *Marseillaise*.[1] There was a run on the numbers of the *Accusateur public*, a periodical pamphlet of Richer de Sérisy, which stigmatised the republicans, not as such, but as *massacreurs*.

Republican customs were decaying. The use of

public morals, either in the departments or in Paris even (see in the *Revue de Paris* of December 15, 1898, my article on *Réaction Thermidorienne à Paris*).

[1] See, in the *Grande Revue* of October 1, 1899, my article on *La Querelle de la Marseillaise et du Réveil du peuple.*

" thee " and " thou " was gradually disappearing. The red bonnet was tabooed. To wear the cockade was still a legal obligation ; but the women did their hardest to bring it into discredit, and the police were continually obliged to intervene in order to compel its use. People continued, however, to call one another *citoyen, citoyenne;* the words *monsieur, madame* were reappearing only in some of the *salons*. The word *sans-culotte* was no longer employed except in an abusive sense. An order of the Department of Paris (at the end of *Germinal* of the year III) enacted that all republican inscriptions should be modified by replacing the words : " *or death* " by " *Humanity, Justice*."

## III.

Impelled by public opinion, the Convention progressively disowned the Terror. On the 4th of *Frimaire* of the year III (November 24, 1794) it decreed the accusation of Carrier, unanimously but for two votes. At the Revolutionary Tribunal, after long denying them, the accused finally admitted the barbarous deeds he was accused of, and pleaded as an excuse the cruelties of the Vendéeans, which had made him lose his head. He was condemned to death, and executed on the 26th of *Frimaire*. The trial of the Public Prosecutor, Fouquier-Tinville, took place about the same time, and was of long duration. The debates, which went to the heart of things, furnish the elements of a retrospective history of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and it was then that the full iniquity of Danton's trial became known. Fouquier defended himself vigorously, repeating : " I did as I was told ; I obeyed." Condemned to death with fifteen of his accomplices, judges or jurors, he was guillotined on the 17th of *Floréal* of the year III (May 6, 1795).

During this reaction against the Terror the cult of

Marat could not survive. From the beginning of 1795 war was declared upon the busts of the Friend of the People, which were broken, whether in the streets or indoors. The Committee of General Security ordered their removal from the theatres, and closed the Maratist Clubs of Lazowsky in the Faubourg Saint-Marceau and of the Quinze-Vingts in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, where the remnants of the Jacobins and Cordeliers used to meet ; and, from that time onward, that Marat, who only the day before was the symbol of the Fatherland attacked by the royalists, was only the bloodthirsty journalist, the instigator of the September massacres. On the 20th of *Pluviôse* of the year III (February 8, 1795) the Convention decreed that the honours of the Panthéon could no longer be bestowed upon any citizen less than ten years after his death. Marat's body was removed.

The official motto of the Convention in 1795 was *War against Royalists and Terrorists*. But it was more especially the Terrorists who were attacked, and now people began to treat as Terrorists those republicans who had governed in the year II, had repulsed the invaders, and had rendered possible the glorious victory of the Treaties of Basle. Although they had contributed to the fall of Robespierre they were accused of Robespierrism, and the Thermidorians of the Right were beginning to demand the heads of the Thermidorians of the Left. The denunciation of Le Cointre against the ex-members of the Committees of Government, which was formerly rejected as calumnious, was presently taken up by men of greater authority. A Commission of twenty-one members, appointed to look into their conduct, denounced, through the person of Saladin, four of the ex-members : Barère, Billaud-Varenne, Collot d'Herbois, and Vadier ; and the Convention began, in *Germinal* of the year III, to proceed with the trial of the Revolutionary Government ; in

other words, to conduct its own trial; much to the joy of the royalists. The Montagnards, all of whom felt themselves threatened, pleaded the cause of the old Committee of Public Safety. Robert Lindet and Carnot explained at some length the part they had played in politics, to the great profit of history, but without succeeding in stopping the blind reaction which had broken loose against the men of the year II.

## IV.

Not the whole of Paris joined in this reaction; and there were still many Montagnard Republicans in the city who had taken part in the insurrections of August 10th and May 31st. But the closing of the principal clubs had deprived them of their rallying-point, and the sections were becoming royalist. On the other hand, it was no longer the political question which was now disturbing the workers of the Faubourgs. Speculation in "corners"[2] and monopolies had produced a factitious dearth, an intolerable poverty.[1] Babeuf had appeared, and was already preaching the theory of equality and the common happiness.[2] The royalist party and the Montagnard Republican party each offered its remedy for the miseries of the people and the painful economic situation. The royalists wished that the people might cry, "*Bread and the King!*" But the people cried, "*Bread and the Constitution of 1793!*" For the policy of the Jacobins, the ex-Terrorists, was at that time to persuade the people to regard this Constitution, the application of which had been postponed, as the necessary instrument of any social reform. At

[1] See my article in the *Revue de Paris*, December 15, 1898, on the Thermidorian reaction in Paris.

[2] As Babeuf had not as yet much influence, we will examine his doctrine and his actions when dealing with the period of the Directorate, when his influence was really considerable.

the time of the trial of the ex-Montagnards, they allied themselves to those whose dreams and whose sufferings Babeuf had expressed, and it was thus that the movement occurred in Paris, social rather than political, which ended in the " days " of *Germinal* and *Prairial;* the end of which was less to save the ex-members of the Committees than to put an end to the famine.

On the 12th of *Germinal* of the year III (April 1, 1795) a crowd of uproarious petitioners invaded the hall of the Convention, demanding food, measures against the royalists, and an end to the persecution of the patriots. The Montagnard deputies appeared to make common cause with the invaders. But the National Guard came to the rescue of the Convention ; which, while promising to remedy the dearth, immediately decreed the instant deportation of Barère, Billaud-Varenne, Collot d'Herbois, and Vadier. Other members of Convention were arrested by decree on that day or the following : among others were Choudieu, Châles, Léonard Bourdon, Duhem, Ruamps, Amar, Thuriot, Cambon, Maignet, Levasseur (of Sarthe), and even that Laurent Le Cointre who had first denounced the Montagnards, and who now seemed too much of a republican. Paris was declared in a state of siege, under the command of Pichegru. The Convention was powerless to keep its promises : bread did not arrive. In the environs the convoys were pillaged, the deputy-commissioners ill-treated, and threatened with death. At Paris the " Dandies " showed the people good white bread, saying : " This is not for every one : this is deputies' bread." On the 29th of *Floréal* the distribution of bread amounted to only two ounces per person. On the 30th it was less. A popular insurrection was announced by a manifesto which was posted up during the night of the 30th of *Floréal.* The placard demanded : Firstly, bread. Secondly, the immediate execution of the Constitution of 1793. Thirdly, the

dissolution of the Government. Fourthly, the liberty of the patriots under detention. On the 1st of *Prairial* armed crowds began to assemble, in order to repeat the doings of June 2nd. The Convention was invaded by a threatening multitude, largely composed of women, who shouted : "*Bread and the Constitution of 1793!*" The deputy Féraud was killed by a pistol-ball ; his head was carried on a pike and presented to the President, Boissy d'Anglas, who saluted it impassively. Under the pressure of the invaders a pretence was made of deliberation, in which the Montagnard deputies took part ; decrees were voted corresponding to the wishes of the people, and a Commission was appointed of four members : Duquesnoy, Prieur (of Marne), Bourbotte, and Du Roy. Finally the Convention was rescued by the royalist or Moderate sections, and by the troops which its commissaries had succeeded in assembling. The rain dispersed the crowds. Instantly the Montagnards who had been allied with the insurgents were decreed under arrest, and then accused.

The insurrection was not vanquished. On the following day, the 2nd of *Prairial*, the Convention decreed that in all the communes there should be made an inventory of all grains and flours : the provision to support each commune until the coming harvest was to be deducted ; the surplus would be taken to provision Paris and the armies. But Paris no longer believed in the promises of the Convention, and a riot more dangerous than that of the day before hemmed in the Convention. General Alexis Dubois, appointed commander of cavalry by the Convention, was made prisoner by the insurgents, who sent him to the Committee of Public Safety, in order to announce their intention not to desist until they had obtained satisfaction. There were negotiations ; promises were made ; a deputation of insurgents was admitted to the bar ; the sections dispersed, singing ; the Convention

was delivered. The night and the next day were employed by the Committees in assembling troops, while the insurgents fortified the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. General Kilmaine, at the head of 1,200 men, among whom the "gilded youth" were in the majority, imprudently engaged the insurgents in the Faubourg, was beaten back, and was obliged ignominiously to retire, amid the groans and thanks to the contemptuous pity of the insurgents. However, the Convention succeeded in assembling quite an army, under the orders of Menou; and the news of the conclusion of peace with Holland gave new prestige and authority to the Conventional policy. Threatened with a bombardment, the Faubourg Saint-Antoine became alarmed and surrendered, guns and artillerymen and all. The Convention was victorious, thanks to the royalists and the army. This was the last popular insurrection in Paris during the Revolutionary period.

The reaction which followed on these days of *Prairial* was terrible. The Convention sent before a popular Commission Rühl, Romme, Du Roy, Goujon, Forestier, Albitte senr., Bourbotte, Duquesnoy, Soubrany, Prieur (of Marne), and Peyssard. Albitte and Prieur fled. Rühl committed suicide before the trial. The others, condemned to death with the exceptions of Peyssard and Forestier, stabbed themselves with a knife which they passed from hand to hand. Goujon, Romme, and Duquesnoy killed themselves at a blow. Soubrany, Du Roy, and Bourbotte, seriously wounded, survived long enough to be guillotined. Thus perished the Republicans who have been called "the last of the Montagnards."

The Convention, as though converted to royalism, pushed its anger to the length of decreeing the arrest of Montagnards who had taken no part in the insurrection of *Prairial;* even of the most impeccable republicans, such as Robert Lindet and Jeanbon Saint-

André. The royalist Henry-Larivière demanded the arrest of Carnot. The Convention was about to vote, when some one cried: "Carnot organised our victories!" Then the Convention, touched with shame, passed on to the orders of the day, and Carnot was saved.

## V.

The republicans, disarmed, found themselves the butt of the vengeance of the royalists, in the south-east and in other parts of France. The royalists, united with the Moderates, were forming themselves into armed troops which they called *Companies of the Sun, Companies of Jesus, Companies of Jehu.* The crimes and excesses of these bands oppressed the patriots with a terror which has been called the *White Terror.* Moreover, the *émigrés* of 1793 were returning *en masse,* a decree having terminated the proscriptions and proceedings on account of federalism. At Lyons, after several isolated murders, the Companies of the Sun proceeded, on the 16th of *Floréal* of the year III, to a general massacre of all the prisoners regarded as "terrorists." It was the same at Roanne. Proceeded against legally, the assassins were acquitted, re-entered Lyons in triumph, and crowned one another in the theatre. The White Terror reigned more especially in the department of Bouches-du-Rhône, with the complicity of the deputies Isnard, Chambon, and Cadroy. The prisons of Aix were full of republicans who were about to come to trial. Fearing lest the Tribunal should not condemn them, the Companies of the Sun of Marseilles repaired to Aix and massacred the prisoners with refinements of barbarity. At this news the working men of Toulon rose in arms, ready to march on Marseilles. The deputy Isnard excited against them, and the republicans in general, the passions already unchained. He cried to

the royalists : "If you have no arms, if you have no muskets, tear up the bones of your fathers and use them to exterminate all these brigands!" On the 6th of *Prairial* the fort of Tarascon, full of prisoners, was invaded by two or three hundred masked men, and the prisoners were thrown into the Rhône from the top of the tower. The water being low, the jagged rocks were uncovered, and the corpses remained among them. The assassins fixed upon each corpse a wooden label, fastened by means of a dagger, with this inscription : "*Forbidden to bury under pain of death.*" Nevertheless, an army, raised by the deputies, marched upon the workers of Toulon, put them to rout, and effected a great slaughter. Then the royalists of Marseilles assassinated the numerous republicans confined in the Fort of Saint-Jean (the 17th of *Prairial* of the year III —June 5, 1795). This was a scene of horror ; the butchers were utterly without pity. A few of the assassins having been arrested, Cadroy insisted on their release. Such was the White Terror, which had not, like the Red Terror, the excuse of exasperated patriotism.

## VI.

By means of the White Terror the royalist party was able to avenge itself, but not to reconquer France. Although the Convention had imprudently disarmed and abandoned the republicans, the Republic survived, because the Republic had assured the national defence, signed the Peace with Prussia, and saved and aggrandised the country. Decimated and insulted, the Convention had still, during the last months of its career, military and diplomatic victories to its credit : the victories of General Moncey over the Spaniards, the peace with Spain, peace with the Landgrav of Hesse-Cassel, and the union of Belgium with France.

The royalists were powerless in the face of such prestige.

These victories, and the treaties of Basle, had deprived the Vendéean insurgents, or, in other words, the true royalists of the interior, the militant royalists, of all chance of success. On the 12th of *Frimaire* of the year III (December 2, 1794) the Convention promised an amnesty to all Vendéeans and all Chouans who should lay down their arms within a month. At the beginning of 1795 General Hoche, commanding in Brittany, and General Canclaux, commanding in Vendée, signed a treaty of peace, the former with Cormatin and the Breton leaders, the latter with Charette, Sapinaud, and Stofflet.

Peace seemed assured, when Louis XVII died in the Temple (on the 20th of *Prairial* of the year III).

The Comte de Provence, a refugee at Verona, immediately assumed the title of Louis XVIII. He spread through France a proclamation, dated July, 1795, which opened with this formula of the *ancien régime:* "Louis, by the Grace of God, King of France and Navarre, to all his subjects, greeting." He expounded his policy. The object of this policy was to restore the "ancient Constitution," to re-establish it "intact." And he defined this ancient Constitution, "this government which was for fourteen centuries the glory of France and the delight of the French." He became more precise, saying that the three orders must be re-established; the parliaments, &c. His only concession was to recognise the accessibility of all employments to all Frenchmen. Apart from that, he wished to re-establish the ancient system *en bloc*. He had no intention of reforming even those abuses which might creep in until he had become all-powerful:

"It is necessary that religious worship shall be re-established, that the hydra of anarchy shall be stifled, and that the royal authority shall

be restored to the plenitude of its rights: we shall then meet all abuses with an insurmountable firmness, and shall know equally well how to find them and reform them."

Full of confidence, he compares the beginning of his reign with that of Henry IV.

This maladroit proclamation could only make royalty still more unpopular, since it was here identified with the *ancien régime*, and the Parisian royalists remained more carefully disguised than ever.

In honour of the new King the Vendéean and Breton insurrections broke out again. The English disembarked three regiments of *émigrés* at Quiberon. Hoche repulsed this invasion. The *émigrés* were forced back into the sea or captured and shot (the 3rd of *Thermidor* of the year III). In the Vendée Charette, appointed generalissimo by Louis XVIII, surprised and massacred the republicans at the military post of Les Essarts. The Comte d'Artois landed on the Ile d'Yeu. But he found the peasantry indifferent, saw that he had no serious chances of success, and re-embarked. Charette commenced a desperate struggle; his resistance was broken in the early days of the Directory.

At the time of the plebiscite on the Constitution the royalists showed themselves here and there in a few primary assemblies. Thus, the mayor of the commune of Doyet (Allier) wrote on the 21st of *Fructidor* of the year III to the procurator-syndic of the district of Montmarault, that the primary assembly could not be held. The royalists, who were in the majority, had cried "*Vive le Roi!*" and prevented any business.

"They cried that they would have no more of the scrutiny: that they unanimously desired royalty, and the old system, which yielded bread: that corn was cheaper under a king; that every one was able to live then, while at present every one is dying of hunger."[1]

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[1] Arch. Nat. The same thing happened in the commune of Venas Allier). It was materially impossible for me to ransack, completely

In Paris the royalists continued to conceal themselves. There were, however, at the time of the vote on the Constitution, a few citizens who demanded the monarchy; ten in the section of the Panthéon, three in that of the Jardin-des-Plantes, eight in that of the Marchés, six in that of the Luxembourg, &c.

There followed, in Paris, an insurrection whose authors did not call themselves royalists, which had an anti-Montagnard, "moderantist" programme, but in which the royalists did really take part, and especially the royalists of the future. This insurrection was caused by the decree which ordered the electors to re-elect two-thirds of the retiring deputies. The sections tried to reproduce, so to speak, a reactionary May 31st. A veritable army hemmed in the Convention; but the latter armed the "patriots of 1789," and Barras, with the aid of Napoleon Bonaparte, dispersed the insurgents. This was the famous day of the 13th of *Vendémiaire*, which saw the failure of a sort of conspiracy against the Convention, formed between the Moderates and the royalists. But there was no demonstration of royalism in this insurrection, and the supporters of Louis XVIII who were concerned in it took good care to keep the mask on, so convinced were they of the unpopularity of royalty.[1]

and methodically, the numerous *cartons* in the Archives relating to this plebiscite. Only by such a search could one say to what extent royalism exhibited itself in the primary assemblies of the year III.

[1] Thibaudeau wrote later, in his *Memoirs:* "The royalists, reunited in the Convention since the 9th of *Thermidor*, suddenly dropped their masks and declared war upon us." I can only find that one royalist in Paris "dropped the mask" at this time: it was the journalist Richer de Sérisy. In his periodical pamphlet, *l'Accusateur public*, he ventured to say that the word *republic*, "destructive of all social order, seems only to have been invented by the Furies for the destruction of all government and the human species." Other journalists who favoured the movement of the sections against the Convention protested that they were not royalists, but anti-terrorist republicans: such were Lacretelle,

## VII.

The religious policy, in the Thermidorian period, may be summed up in a word: its object was the separation of Church and State.

When, in November, 1792, Robespierre and Danton were opposed to the establishment of this system, it was still thought possible to make an alliance between the Church and the Revolution. La Vendée, Federalism, the cult of Reason, the cult of the Supreme Being, soon proved that it was impossible to rally the Church, and also that it could not be destroyed. Then Cambon repeated his proposition, not as a philosopher, but as a financier and a man of common sense.

As the Civil Constitution still existed on paper, the clergy, after *Thermidor*, demanded their salaries.

Their salaries were of two sorts. There were *pensions* and *stipends*.

*Pensions* had been granted to the regular or secular clergy by the Constituent Assembly, in respect of suppressed benefices; a decree of the Convention, of September 27, 1792, reduced them so that the maximum of each pension did not exceed 1,000 livres.

As for the *stipends* of the constitutional clergy,

Vaublanc, Poncelin, Langlois, Du Pont, Fiévée, Lézay-Marnésia, Michaud, and the Bertins. The majority declared themselves royalists later, and said (perhaps believed) that from this time they were acting for the King. Nevertheless, they were not agents of Louis XVIII. In any case, if they were already royalists they were carefully masked. One of their journals, the *Courrier français*, on the 2nd of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV, was able to say: "At the Convention they are talking of nothing but royalists. Never perhaps, in this ancient palace of kings, has there been so much talk of kings as since they have no longer existed. Ah, well! I, the lantern of Diogenes in my hand, am looking everywhere for a royalist, and cannot find one. Two numbers of the *Sentinelle*, post free, are offered to any one who will show me a royalist, dead or living; I offer four to whosoever shall show me a patriot of '89."

we have seen that the Convention had three times solemnly declared that it would maintain them (Decrees of September 30, 1792, and January 11th and June 27, 1793).

But this policy did not produce the expected benefits : Constitutional Bishops allied themselves with the Federalist insurrection. The Convention then sought to give the clergy a severe warning, by drawing its purse-strings. In virtue of the Civil Constitution the bishops drew 50,000 livres in Paris, 20,000 in cities of more than 50,000 inhabitants, and 12,000 in others. On September 18, 1793, after a lively debate, in which Cambon [1] demanded that the stipends of the bishops should be reduced to 3,000 livres, the Convention reduced them uniformly to 6,000; it also suppressed the stipends of all the episcopal vicars, while granting pensions of 1,200 livres to all those who were actually beneficed.

On the 2nd of *Frimaire* a proposal was made to grant a pension to those ecclesiastics who should resign, while reducing the stipends of the rest ; but Danton opposed any reduction of the stipends of the constitutional clergy.

However, it soon came to pass that the pensions and stipends of the clergy ceased to be paid.

By the decree of the 6th of *Germinal* of the year II the Convention, in view of the terrible embarrassment of the Treasury, ordered the stoppage of the payment of arrears in pensions of all kinds after the 1st of *Germinal*. From that date the ecclesiastical ex-beneficiaries would cease, with the other pensioners of the State, and even the resigning priests, to receive any-

[1] Cambon now thought only of reducing these stipends, and not of suppressing them. At the session of the 2nd of *Frimaire*, he even demanded the provisional maintenance of the stipends of the ministers of the Catholic worship. See my *Le Culte de la Raison et de l'Être Suprême.*

thing from the Treasury. So much for *pensions*. As for *stipends:* a great number of communes having suppressed their parishes, the churches were generally closed, and the constitutional priests found themselves out of employment, and in general ceased to be paid.[1]

Such was the situation of the constitutional clergy on the 9th of *Thermidor*. They had not entirely lost their legal existence, but they were no longer in receipt either of pensions or stipends.

After the fall of Robespierre the Convention gave satisfaction to the ex-beneficiaries and those who had resigned, who had not drawn pensions since the 6th of *Germinal;* it decreed on the 18th of *Thermidor* that the arrears due to them should be paid immediately.

But nothing was decreed with regard to the stipends of the members of the constitutional clergy who had not resigned. Many of them demanded to be paid in virtue of the law of the 18th of *Thermidor*, although this law spoke only of *pensions* and *former ministers of religion*.

Some district administrations paid them ; others refused ; the majority demanded instructions of the Committee of Finance or the National Treasury.

The situation was embarrassing, in fact, since the civil constitution, though ruined in fact, still existed in law.

It was then that Cambon undertook to propose to the Convention, on behalf of the Committee of Finance, a radical measure, the principle of that which we today call the separation of Church and State.

It was, I repeat, from a financial point of view that this important revolutionary and philosophical question was brought before the Convention, at the session of the 2nd *sans-culottide* of the year II (the 18th of September, 1794).

[1] Cambon's report, on the 2nd *sans-culottide* of the year II (September 18, 1794).—*Moniteur*, xxi. 790.

We have already, while examining previous questions, summed up this report of Cambon's. Let us add that he spoke of religion with contempt or not at all. If the State, he said, proclaim any religious principle whatever, there will at once be a clergy to pay. Were not the ministers of the cult of the Supreme Being already demanding a salary?

Cambon was applauded; his proposed decree, adopted at the outset with acclamation, was then voted article by article. Here is the principal article: "The French Republic no longer pays the expenses or salaries of any cult."[1] Then followed temporary arrangements: priests actually in service were granted the same annual relief as those who had resigned; those who had received too much would repay.

This decree, if we judge it only by the terms of the report, was inspired neither by a spirit of benevolence toward Catholicism, nor even by the spirit of liberty. It is quite possible that Cambon saw in it only what he professed to see: a measure of economy: and it is possible that the Convention passed the decree merely as a measure of war against the Roman Church. Nevertheless, it was interpreted by public opinion as an act of disarmament directed against Catholicism.

However, dechristianisation still continued here and there in the departments. Thus Mallarmé and Bouillerot, deputy-commissioners in Tarn, Gers, and Haute-Garonne, issued at Albi, on the 3rd of *Frimaire* of the year III, a politico-religious order as violent as the most violent of those which had been issued before Robespierre's fall. It stated, to begin with, that the disturbances which had recently taken place in Tarn "had for their principal causes: Firstly, the clandestine exercise of a religion which has hitherto been the curse of the nations; secondly, the hope of re-establishing it entirely; thirdly, the residence of the former priests and ministers, who, by secret practices,

seek, for the most part, to prolong the reign of falsehood and error."[2] They ordered that municipalities in which "gatherings" took place should be dissolved; "that all the ex-priests or former ministers of a cult, whatever it might be," should be obliged to retire to Toulouse or Cahors, except ex-priests who had married. Widowers with children, and septuagenarians, should be required to reside in the chief city of the district. "The former churches will be closed immediately after the publication of the present order, and the keys entrusted to the national agents of the districts, until otherwise ordered." All bells were to be taken down and broken. "All gatherings of citizens or assemblages of communes are expressly prohibited," except the assemblies for the celebration of the *Décadi*. "If it should happen that, on the pretext of celebrating worship, several citizens or citizenesses should assemble, even in their own homes, or any other, they will be declared suspect and treated as such."

On the 27th of *Brumaire* of the year III, on a report of Lakanal's, the Convention voted what we to-day call the "laïcisation" of primary instruction: religion was banished from the schools, and replaced by the study of the Declaration of Rights, the Constitution, and "Republican ethics."[2] Such presbyteries as were not sold served to house the school-teachers.[1]

The same "philosophical" spirit inspired the report made on the 1st of *Nivôse* of the year III, in the name of the Committee of Public Instruction, by M.-J. Chénier, upon the organisation of the decadal festivals which had been in question so long. Chénier thought it possible to destroy what he called "prejudice and

[1] Concerning public instruction during the democratic Republic, see the compilation of M. Guillaume's, his article *Convention nationale* in the *Dictionnaire de pédagogie*, M. Liard's *L'Enseignement supérieur pendant la Révolution*, and a little book by M. Pouchet, *Les Séances pendant la Terreur*, reprinted by M. Guillaume in 1896.

fanaticism " only by institutions and education, and he proposed to institute, in the first place, a civic festival, to be held each tenth day, in all the communes of the Republic ; moral instruction would be given, patriotic songs would be sung, there would be dancing, and the people would amuse themselves " spontaneously." The Convention voted one of the articles of this proposal. It was then that Grégoire pronounced the great speech which he had been preparing for so long, and in which, under colour of demanding religious liberty,[1] he really opposed the Christian spirit to the philosophical spirit, loudly demanded the resurrection of Catholicism, and let it be understood that in his opinion the Republic could only survive if it became Christian once more.

The Convention decreed the orders of the day over Grégoire's motion with bellicose enthusiasm, and in that way plainly indicated its refusal to restore Catholicism.[2] Chénier's anti-Christian proposal concerning the

[1] Grégoire concluded by this projected decree : " The constituted authorities are instructed to guarantee to all citizens the free exercise of their religion, while taking measures that shall ensure public order and tranquillity." Fundamentally this was only a repetition of the famous decree of the 16th of *Frimaire* of the year II, and the Convention had never ceased, in theory, to recognise religious liberty. But it was irritated by this apparition, in the tribune, of resuscitated Catholicism in the shape of a bishop in priestly habits ; Catholicism asserting itself with hauteur as the infallible master of republican consciences. See on this subject the *Républicain français,* and the *Vedette ou Gazette du jour* of the 2nd of *Nivôse* of the year III.

[2] See the *Moniteur* and Gazier, p. 116. The *Procès-verbal,* lii. 17, 18, gives the most detailed account of what occurred in the Convention at the end of Grégoire's speech : " A member made, on a pre-arranged motion, a speech on the necessity of proclaiming the liberty of worship, and proposed a projected decree. A great number of voices demanded that the Convention should pass on to the orders of the day. A member explained that one cannot without danger deal with anything relating to religion ; that the religion of the Republican is to be a good son, a good father, and a good husband : that republicanism is nothing more than the complement of the virtues. He recalled the misfortunes that have been occasioned at

"decadal" festivals was discussed with the utmost zeal, but no understanding was arrived at, and this important philosophical debate miscarried; all that was decided was that there should be, in the decree upon the organisation of public instruction (the 3rd of *Brumaire* of the year III) an article establishing seven national festivals.

But Grégoire's speech had produced a great impression. The deputies Audrein, Durand-Maillane, and Baudin (from the Ardennes) printed some remarkable brochures on the same subject. Grégoire and his friends approved implicitly of the separation of Church and State, but wished to see the re-establishment of public worship, and were bold enough to re-establish it. In Loir-et-Cher, in Grégoire's diocese, the churches were reopened in January, 1795, and the constitutional clergy resumed their functions. Elsewhere, in Franche-Comté, the refractory clergy restored the altars. The deputy-commissioners and the Committee of Public Safety themselves revived religious worship in Brittany and La Vendée. This movement of religious resurrection became irresistible. It must be remembered at this time the Convention was negotiating with the European Powers, and that it was not to its advantage to preserve the appearance of an atheistical government.[1] This is why the Convention decided to allow

different periods by the Catholic Church, and therefore he called for the orders of the day.—Adopted.—A member proposed the immediate discussion of the projected decree presented by the Committee of Public Instruction in order to destroy the effect which might have been produced by the proposition to restore the exercise of the Catholic religion. Another member opposed this demand, observing that by proceeding to the orders of the day they would do this dangerous proposal sufficient justice, and concluded by demanding that the decree should be maintained and the session raised.—The president announced that in the evening a session would be held for the purpose of renewing the bureau.—The session rose at 4 o'clock.

[1] I do not think there had so far occurred any negotiations on this subject, even secret negotiations, with the Pope. Since the murder

Catholicism a certain amount of legal liberty by the decree of the 3rd of *Ventôse*, which was voted after a report of Boissy d'Anglas'.

This report, very incoherent as to its form, was based on a perfectly lucid idea : the philosophical and secular ideal of M.-J. Chénier's report. Boissy d'Anglas congratulates himself that Church and State have been separated :

"You have finally," he says, "separated from the Government a power that has long been its rival ; and, while philosophy has presented it to men's eyes despoiled of all that was seductive in it, you have expelled it for ever from your political organism. . . . Citizens, religion has been banished from the Government : it will never return."

He then declared the Catholic religion to be intolerant, arrogant, bloodthirsty, puerile, absurd, and melancholy. The ideal state of things would be that in place of religion "men should enlighten their own minds by the rays of reason, and become attached to one another only by the ties of common interests, only by the principles of the social organisation, by the imperious feelings that impel them to gather together and cherish one another." It was by "the wisdom of the law" that the Convention would prepare "the undivided reign of philosophy, the inviolate empire of morality. Soon no one would remark these absurd dogmas except to despise them. . . . Soon the religion

of Bassville (January, 1793) all relations with the Court of Rome had been suspended. Certainly the citizen Cacault, appointed *chargé d'affaires* in Rome, had been instructed to demand reparation. But he did not proceed thither ; he stayed in Florence. I have read his correspondence, in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ; interesting to a historian of the negotiations with Tuscany, it is useless as a source of information on religious affairs, excepting a letter of the 21st of *Nivôse*, year III, in which Cacault informs the Committee of Public Safety "that he has heard from Rome not only that the Pope has written to his nuncio in Spain relative to procuring peace, but that he has also instructed Mgr. Spina, who is at Genoa, to find some means of inducing you to speak, and to survey the ground."

of Socrates, of Marcus Aurelius, of Cicero would be the religion of the world."

But to arrive at this result we must go ahead slowly, as Nature goes. No Hébertism ; no persecution.[1] Indulgent to error, let us prevent it from doing harm by making good police regulations.

This law was voted forthwith, after a debate of no particular significance.[2]

It proclaimed the liberty of all religions, referred to the correctional police those who should impede or in any way outrage the exercise of religious worship, declared that the State would neither lodge nor pay the ministers of any religion, and prohibited all external ceremony, all external signs, all external inscriptions, as well as all public proclamations or convocations. No one might appear in public in the habits, ornaments, or vestments affected by those engaged in religious ceremonies. All assemblies for the purposes of religious worship must be under the supervision of the police. The communes could neither acquire nor rent any premises for religious purposes, nor might any endowment be established, whether permanent or for life, nor any tax imposed to meet the expenses.

This decree was welcomed by an explosion of enthusiasm. Catholicism reappeared everywhere. As early as the following day masses were said in all the chapels of Paris, and on the day of Passover, 1795, nearly all

[1] "Be careful not to force people to practise with enthusiasm in a cellar or a quarry what they would practise with indifference, even with boredom, in a private house."

[2] M.-J. Chénier demanded an adjournment to allow of the preparation of speeches. But Cambon opposed it in the name of the Declaration of Rights, which had proclaimed religious liberty, and Séb. de Laporte said that public opinion must not be left much longer in uncertainty. The decree was adopted, article by article, with very slight amendments. This debate apparently produced no particular sensation, for the *Moniteur* is alone in reproducing it.

the shops were closed in the very city that had applauded the cult of Reason.

The correspondents of the *Annales de la Religion* draw a curious picture of the attitude of the provinces at this period. Thus one wrote from Chalons-sur-Marne to this effect on April 21, 1795: "Immediately the decree relating to the liberty of worship had reached this town, the excitement of trying to procure suitable premises for the exercise of worship was universal. Although extremely numerous they could not contain the crowds, especially on Sundays and feast-days; the congregation sat on the staircases, in the courtyards, or even in the streets. At Sens the decree was proclaimed by the municipality to the sound of the drum, and the people applauded.

"Every one seemed to come out of a lethargic sleep. . . . Yesterday, the second Sunday in Lent, when the Gospel of the Transfiguration was read at Mass, seemed like a day of resurrection. Work was stopped and the shops were shut throughout the town. Every one hastened to the Church of Saint-Pierre, the two proprietors of which had opened the doors and arranged the interior for the Divine offices. A first Mass was said at seven o'clock; another at eight; High Mass, at half-past nine, was solemnly chanted, preceded by the *Veni Creator*. The snow and rain, which did not cease all day, were powerless to relax the zeal of the citizens. . . . Such were the crowds that a fourth Mass had to be said at eleven."

In the evening there was vespers, followed by Benediction and a *Te Deum*, "in which the municipals even mingled their voices with those of the multitude." At Chéry-Chartreuve, in the district of Soissons, they could hardly finish the singing of the *Veni Creator*, because every one was weeping.

There was almost everywhere the same enthusiasm.

Those who had believed in the possibility of dechristianising France at a blow were undeceived. The "philosophers" of the Convention had given but a poor welcome to the decree of the 3rd of *Ventôse*.

The spectacle of this instantaneous and universal religious revival filled them with anxiety. But their ill-humour, which public opinion did not encourage, could vent itself only in futile epigrams. Thus the *Feuille villageoise* of Ginguené, on the 30th of *Ventôse*, published an article entitled "*De l'obstination religieuse et des meurtres qu'elle a causés*," in which we find "an approximate list of all the men massacred in the name of the Christian religion," a total of 9,668,800 victims.[1]

The *Décade philosophique* mentioned without comment the decrees relating to the separation of Church and State. But in its issue of the 20th of *Ventôse* it published a more than irreverent fragment of Parny's *War of the Gods*.

The Catholic movement, so popular and spontaneous, was not to be checked by such gibes as these; and as the movement organised itself they were ignored.

But there were really two parallel organisations: that of the refractory clergy and that of the constitutional clergy.

The refractory *émigrés* returned furtively, one by one. They were more wealthy and more enthusiastic than the constitutional clergy. They marched under the Pope's orders; many of them returned from Rome.

The constitutional clergy had no longer any legal existence. Yet it was on them especially that authority looked with a kindly eye; the more so as many of the non-constitutional priests were still subject to the laws of proscription. They were the constitutional masses that the municipalities and the deputy-commissioners attended.

At the outset the late official clergy were somewhat

[1] Vol. ix. p. 560. On the 15th of *Vendémiaire* of the year III (vol. ix. p. 33) the *Feuille villageoise* had published a rather curious dialogue between citizen *Décadi* and M. *Dimanche*—Goodman Tenth-day and Mr. Sabbath.

at sea, on account of the advantage which the refractory priests obtained from the law of *Ventôse*. Grégoire, however, came to their rescue, and it was really he who organised them. It was Grégoire who was the first to dare to behave like a bishop and to resume a bishop's functions: as early as the 22nd of *Ventôse* (March 12, 1793) he addressed a pastoral letter to his diocesans, which produced a great effect and made some noise in the world, since in that letter he affirmed the alliance of the Revolution and Christianity. "The vessel of the Republic," he wrote, "and that of the Church, battered by storms, are sailing in company and will safely arrive in port." [1]

Three days later, on the 25th of *Ventôse*, the constitutional bishops, assembled in Paris, addressed an encyclical letter "to their friends the other bishops and to the vacant churches." It was the rebirth of the Gallican Church, but the Gallican Church democratised. They congratulated themselves on the separation of Church and State. Then they laid the foundations of their organisation. The bishops elected by the people would be approved and instituted by the provincial bishops, in the presence of the Metropolitan. The ecclesiastical *arrondissements* of 1790 were to be preserved, as well as the parishes. In short, it was the Civil Constitution, but without the support and consecration of the State. The majority of the constitutional bishops who survived notified their adherence.[2] They founded a society of Christian Philo-

[1] A curious fact concerning this pastoral letter is that Grégoire shows himself to be a little sceptical concerning the faith of the Catholics of the period: "Already," he says, "you are flocking to our assemblies. What motive brings you there? If it is human deference or the love of novelty you are like the wicked Israelites of whom the Lord said: '*This people has honoured Me with its lips, but its heart is far from Me.*'"

[2] These ex-constitutionals pitilessly rejected the married priests, to the number of some 2,000. Many of them implored pardon and sent away their wives. Others took the oath that the marriage had not

sophy, composed of clerks and laymen, of which Grégoire was the leading spirit. They started a periodical, the *Annales de la Religion*. A few months later they published a new encyclical, which contained "regulations to assist in the re-establishment of the Gallican Church." Therein they proclaimed that the Government of the Christian Republic was not monarchical; the true authority was that of the body of bishops, the successors of the Apostles. They declared their subscription to the four Articles of 1682, and convoked a National Council for May 1, 1796.

This Church, then, existed: but it was poor; it did not prosper; it could not find houses and chapels as early as could the refractory clergy. When General Hoche, in Brittany, invited Bishop Le Coz to come and preach to the country folk, the latter replied: "Where shall I gather them together, if there are no churches?"

Everywhere there was a demand for churches; it was soon a popular cry.

Deputy-commissioners intervened in favour of this demand, which seemed to be universal. Lanjuinais, who had returned from a journey in Brittany, read an important report, on the 11th of *Prairial*, in the name of the Committees of Public Safety, General Security, and Legislation; in which report he represented the restitution of the churches to the faithful as a means of attaching men's minds to the Republic. He said that "the impossibility of supervising congregations assembled in rooms, and the extreme facility of exciting, under such conditions, fanaticism and rebellion, should alone be sufficient to persuade the Convention to allow the use of the temples." But he demanded that ministers of religion should make a public declaration of submission to the laws and the

been consummated. Grégoire and his friends were inflexible. The refractory priests were better disposed; they welcomed and restored some of the priests in this case.

Government. There was a lively debate. Génissieu wished to force even the refractory priests who worshipped in private chambers to make this declaration of submission. This he could not obtain, and the decree went to the vote and was passed ; and all churches not alienated were restored to the uses of religion. Besides this, the Committee of Legislation issued a circular (the 29th of *Prairial* of the year III) which explained that the submission demanded did not refer to the past, so that the churches would be restored to those who had not taken the constitutional oath just as much as to those who had done so.

We may read in the *Annales de la Religion* with what delight this decree was received, and how the churches were reopened all over the country. In Paris, the Church of Saint-Médard had been opened a month before the decree. The *Fête-Dieu* was celebrated then (on the 16th of *Prairial*—June 4, 1793) with great solemnity, in the presence of an enormous crowd.[1] The decree of the 11th of *Prairial* restored

[1] "The office of the *Fête-Dieu*," we read in the *Annales* (1,162), "drew an astonishing concourse of the faithful to the church of Saint-Médard in Paris. One even had the pleasure of seeing there a large number of persons of a very different, and even of an opposite way of thinking in respect of the present religious and political troubles in France. The Bishop of Dax officiated; the Bishop of Ain, whose indefatigable zeal and genuine oratorical talents cannot be too greatly admired, preached both morning and evening, for, in imitation of the Fathers and the great bishops of antiquity, he celebrates no office, performs no ceremony, without breaking the bread of the Word with the assistants. The bishops, who attended this august ceremony in large numbers, were situated in the sanctuary, and were surrounded by the Presbytery of Paris, several members of which assisted the officiating pontiff. . . . These vast assemblies of the faithful, who prayed for several hours, observing a silence which was interrupted only to express by solemn chants their sorrow, their joy, their repentance and their trust ; of the faithful who invoked Heaven for the public happiness, for the prosperity of the State, and to turn aside the anger of the Most High and to beg of Him His

twelve churches in Paris; this number was increased to fifteen. On the 29th of *Thermidor* (August 11, 1795) the keys of Notre-Dame were surrendered to a *Catholic Society*, consisting of Grégoire, Agier, Royer, Saurine, and others, who celebrated there, four days later, the feast of the Assumption; and, after having for some time shared the church with the Theophilanthropists, they worshipped there until the Concordat, when Napoleon turned them out.[1] In the provinces similar societies were formed in many localities.

We have less information as to the benefit which the formerly refractory clergy obtained from the decree which restored the churches to religious uses; or rather it is the details that are lacking. But we know that from the month of *Prairial* of the year III this clergy appeared openly, and exhibited a zeal authorised by the new law. The Gallican Church was surrounded by and mixed up with the clergy faithful to the Pope, who gained rather more popular sympathy, especially in the country districts; while the ex-constitutional clergy drew their congregations rather from the *bourgeoisie* and the inhabitants of the cities. The revival of the Catholic religion was in fact favoured by this very rivalry, and under the auspices of the Gallicans and Ultramontanes the mass of the nation resumed in practice the religious habits to which it had secretly

indispensable mercies ; these great assemblies which demonstrated so clearly that religion alone can be the centre and the soul of a gentle, fraternal, and virtuous sociability, and that worship is necessary to the peaceable intercourse of citizens; these assemblies, I say, produced on an earnest soul the most imposing impression."

[1] M. Gazier has related the history of this Catholic Society, which was formed under the direction of the priests forming the presbytery of Paris, since the Bishop of Paris, Gobel, could not be replaced. See his interesting book, *Études sur l'histoire religieuse de la Révolution française*, Paris, 1887. M. Pressensé has also studied the question in his *L'Église et la Révolution française.*

remained faithful, even when the Terror had outwardly dechristianised almost the whole of France.

Lanjuinais, in his report, had announced an important measure of police law referring to religion in general. It was not presented and voted until the 6th and 7th of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV, less than a month before the dissolution of the Convention. Despite the opposition of Defermon, who did not wish for any law referring to the priests in particular, as they did not, he said, form a separate class of citizens, the law was voted almost without debate.

This law resumed and ratified the preceding laws. It proclaimed anew the principles of liberty and of separation. It provided the formula of submission to the laws demanded of ministers of religion : " I recognise that the whole mass of French citizens is the sovereign, and I promise submission and obedience to the laws of the Republic." This formula could neither be added to, modified, nor retracted, under pain of severe penalties.

Guarantees were established against all religions that might seek to become exclusive or dominant. No ceremony could take place outside the churches granted for that purpose, except those allowed in private houses, provided that not more than ten were present.

The other principal police measures were : 1. The publication was forbidden of any writing emanating from a minister of religion living out of France. 2. Imprisonment for life of any priest who should incite to the re-establishment of royalty. 3. Two years' imprisonment for any minister who should speak against the sale of national property.

This was a law of expedience, passed on the morrow of a civil war. But it was also a just law. The enlightened Catholics accepted it as such, and were profoundly grateful to the Convention.

Thus the Convention, after *Thermidor*, regulated the

question of the relations between Church and State by four laws :

1. In September, 1794, it separated Church and State.
2. In February, 1795, it established the liberty of worship.
3. In May, 1795, it restored the churches for religious purposes, on condition that the ministers submitted to the laws of the State.
4. In September, 1795, it regulated the liberty of worship as generously as was possible in a country still bleeding from religious conflicts.

The old constitutional clergy used their new liberty to support the Republic which had reopened the churches. The refractory clergy, re-established in common law, often profited by their liberty to preach revolt. The *émigrés* priests returned in flocks. For this reason, on the 3rd of *Brumaire* of the year IV, the Convention ordered the execution in twenty-four hours of the laws passed in 1792 and 1793 against priests subject to deportation and imprisonment, and annulled at the same time such orders of the Committees and deputy-commissioners as might be contrary to these laws; in this way it struck at dangerous citizens, but assured, as far as was possible, the liberty of religious worship.

In this way the system of the separation of Church and State was established in France; which was to last until the time of the Concordat.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CONSTITUTION OF THE YEAR III

I. The trend of opinion and preliminary debates.—II. Suppression of universal suffrage.—III. Re-establishment of the property-owners' suffrage.—IV. Discussions relative to the property-owners' suffrage.—V. Organisation of the legislative power.—VI. Organisation of the executive power.—VII. Administration and municipal organisation.—VIII. Declaration of Rights.—IX. General character of the Constitution.—X. Principal organic electoral laws.—XI. The plebiscite.—XII. The Constitution put into force.

### I.

THE democratic Constitution of 1793 was suspended only provisionally, because the rule of the Revolutionary Government, which replaced it, was itself only provisional. It was understood, and there was in a sense a compact with the people, that so soon as France was rescued from the serious dangers then threatening her independence, this Constitution would be put into force.

The insurrection of the 9th of *Thermidor*, which was directed against Robespierre, and not against democracy, did not at first appear to threaten in any way this compact. Even when the forces of reaction against individuals spread from the Robespierrists to the Democrats, even when the Jacobin Club was destroyed, no one dared forthwith to express the hope or the intention of abolishing the Constitution of 1793.

But the Republican Democrats, threatened as Terrorists, began to demand the consummation of this Constitution, or, more precisely, the preparation of its organic laws ; that is, that the Convention should once more give a solemn undertaking to establish a democratic Republic.

It was thus around the Constitution of 1793 that the battle was fought between the democratic and the *bourgeois* Republicans ; the former fighting openly ; the latter, at the outset in disguise ; though perhaps at the outset in unconscious disguise.

Two days after the Jacobin Club was closed the Democratic Party in the Convention introduced a motion (*Brumaire* the 24th of the year III) proposed by Audouin and Barère, to the effect that a commission should be appointed for the purpose of preparing the organic laws of " this Republican Constitution, the palladium of our liberties and the safeguard of the Rights of Man." This motion was opposed, not as being democratic, but as unreasonable, by Pelet (of Lozère) and Tallien, who objected that the country was still in a state of war, and, by an inversion of *rôles*, put forward the very arguments which the Montagnards had employed before the 9th of *Thermidor*, in order to maintain the revolutionary and provisional character of the Government. A debate on the Constitution, they objected, would divide us ; let us remain united, in order to make peace with such of our enemies as are tractable, and then let us destroy the " New Carthage " (namely, England), and then, but only then, we will organise the Constitution. The Convention proceeded to the orders of the day.

At that period no criticism of the Constitution of 1793 had been formulated. Three months later, when the actors and the actions of the year II and especially the members of the Governmental Committees were on their public trial, the Thermidorians of the Right

entered upon a campaign against the democratic principles of the Constitution; but an indirect and hypocritical campaign. They still styled themselves democrats; perhaps a few of them really were. On the 11th of *Ventôse* of the year III Fréron, one of the leaders of the campaign, replied from the tribune to those who accused him of attacking the idea of democracy:

"I speak of the manner in which the Rights of Man have been drawn up: they immediately accuse me of wishing to abolish the Rights of Man. I say that the Constitution is like Pygmalion's Galatea, hidden behind the purple curtain that conceals her; that we must hold to it the torch of Prometheus; they exclaim that I am attacking democracy."

He protested his reverence for the "sublime charter," but wished to "withdraw it from the holy tabernacle" to render it applicable: that is, in plain words, to revise it. He, like the Montagnards, demanded that a Commission should prepare the organic articles; but in proposing a decree to the effect that the "definitive Government" should be established "on the bases of the Constitution of 1793," he betrayed his intention of preserving these bases only.

The Convention heard him, applauded, and refrained from voting. As yet it neither dared nor desired to break its compact. On the 18th of *Ventôse* certain alterations or repairs of the hall of the Assembly necessitated the temporary removal of the copy of the Constitution exposed there. Legendre and Villetard demanded its immediate replacement, in a good light, in the centre of the hall, because the Convention "should always have before its eyes the democratic Constitution of 1793."

This request was at once obeyed, says the *Moniteur*, "amid repeated cries of '*Vive la République!*' '*Vive la Constitution!*'"

The democrats were organising a demonstration in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, which culminated, on the 1st of *Germinal*, in an application on the part of the sections of Quinze-Vingts and Montreuil. They repaired to the bar of the Convention to complain of the sufferings of the people, the high prices of provisions, and the intrigues of enemies at home with enemies abroad :

"You have in your hands the most effectual means of allaying the political tempest of which we are so unhappily the plaything. Put it into use : organise from to-day the popular Constitution of 1793 ; the French nation has accepted it ; has sworn to defend it ; it is its palladium and the terror of its enemies."

Châles supported the petition. He also demanded the execution of the 124th and last article of the Constitution, enacting that "the Declarations of Rights and the Act of Constitution shall be inscribed on tablets in the midst of the Legislative Body and in public places."

Thibaudeau opposed the suggestion ; the execution of the article in question would be equivalent to a declaration that the Constitution was unchangeable and intangible ; and he, first of all, ventured to attack the "sublime charter" from the tribune.

"I do not know what you wish to express by speaking every day of a democratic Constitution. Do you mean, by a democratic Constitution, a government in which the people itself has the exercise of every right? (*All the members: No, no!*) I know of only one democratic Constitution ; it is that which would offer the people liberty, equality, and the peaceful enjoyment of its rights. (*Lively applause.*) In this sense, the existing Constitution is by no means democratic, for the national representation would still be in the power of a usurping commune, which has many times striven to destroy it and to kill liberty!"

He announced, in definite terms, that he would have several amendments of the Constitution to propose.

The Convention voted, on the same day, that "in the course of the decade [1] a commission would be appointed especially instructed to labour at the manufacture of the organic laws which were to put the democratic Constitution of 1793 into a state of activity."[2] Far from entering on the course of action suggested by Thibaudeau, it agreed to introduce into a police measure which it passed the same day an amendment of Châles', which placed in the category of crimes "the seditious cries which many have ventured to utter in the streets and other public places in disfavour of the sovereignty of the people, the Republic, the Constitution of 1793, which the people have accepted, and of the national representation. On the 4th of *Germinal* Siéyès feels himself obliged to declare, from the tribune, that the Constitution "is worthy and may not be attacked, and that it is" for us the supreme law.

The force of sectional opinion in favour of the Constitution of 1793 became at last so powerful that Merlin (of Douai) proposed, on the 8th of *Germinal*, to put it in operation immediately, and to convoke the primary assemblies for the 1st of *Floréal*. This motion was rejected on the 10th, and the Convention decreed that it would appoint on the next day but one the commission whose duty it would be to prepare the organic laws.

The section of Quinze-Vingts appeared at the bar on the 11th, urging the immediate establishment of the Constitution.

On the 12th of *Germinal* the hall of the Convention was invaded by uproarious petitioners, demanding *bread and the Constitution of 1793*. This insurrection quelled, the Convention appointed a Commission on the 14th; it consisted of seven members: Siéyès, Merlin (of Douai), Thibaudeau, Mathieu, Lesage, Creuzé, Latouche, and Cambacérès.

[1] Week of ten days.

Of the private labours of this Commission we know nothing. La Revellière-Lépeaux merely states in his *Mémoires* that "Siéyès and Cambacérès were by no means inclined to compromise themselves with the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, which could not understand any jest or scoff at the expense of its wonderful code of 1793." Pelet (of Lozère), on the 19th, from the tribune, advised the Commission to correct the Constitution in a useful manner; its authors, he said, were not gifted with "the privilege of infallibility"; and he suggested a few alterations which were anything but democratic. The Commission turned a deaf ear.[1] On the 29th Cambacérès read a report in the name of the Commission in which he made no proposal whatever as to correcting the Constitution, but confined himself to outlining a plan for the completion of the organic articles. Through him the Commission admitted its impotence or its timidity, and requested that the duties with which it was entrusted should be transferred to other hands. The Convention granted their desire, decreeing the formation of a new Commission of eleven members, instructed to "prepare the laws necessary in order to put the Constitution in a state of activity." It was to submit its labours in the following order: the laws relating to the territorial composition of the Republic and its internal distribution; those relating to the exercise of the sovereignty of the people; those relating to the Executive Council and its agents; those concerning external relations; finance; the public forces; and

[1] Even then, scarcely any one dared to criticise the Constitution even indirectly, whether in the press or in pamphlets. One of the first to denounce it as faulty—Lezay-Marnésia—expressed himself thus: "As it is not permissible to speak of the Constitution of 1793 otherwise than well, I will not speak of it at all. But as it is not forbidden to criticise the Constitution of Pennsylvania, on which it has been roughly modelled, it is of the latter I will speak." (*Qu'est-ce que la Constitution de 1793?*

the legislative body. Citizens were invited to submit their proposals, that the Commission might have them printed.

This Commission consisted of Cambacérès, Merlin (of Douai), Siéyès, Thibaudeau, La Revellière-Lépeaux, Lesage (of Eure-et-Loir), Boissy d'Anglas, Creuzé-Latouche, Louvet (of Loiret), Berlier, and Daunou.[1]

A decree of the 15th of *Floréal* declared that no member of the Commission of Eleven could also be a member of the Committee of Public Safety or of the Committee of General Security.[2] Cambacérès, Siéyès, and Merlin chose to remain on the Committee of Public Safety; the Convention replaced them on the 17th by Lanjuinais, Baudin (of the Ardennes) and Durand-Maillane.

The papers of the Commission of Eleven consist merely of the proposals received by it and a few rough drafts of its work on the constitution, with corrections and notes in the hand of Daunou, who seems to have played as important a part in these secret labours as he afterwards played in the public debates. No register exists; no minutes; no trace of its deliberations; but there are, in the memoirs of two of its members, La Revellière-Lépeaux and Thibaudeau, certain references to its work.[3]

[1] The result of this election was announced during the session of the 4th of *Floréal*.

[2] La Revellière-Lépeaux (vol. i. p. 229) says it was the "circumspect Cambacérès" who was responsible for the passing of this decree, in conjunction with the "prudent Siéyès," so that they might escape from the Commission. It was Thibaudeau who proposed the decree.

[3] Durand-Maillane, in his memoirs, published in 1825, under the title of *Histoire de la Convention Nationale*, says little of the Commission of Eleven. He states only that it was he who proposed to it (before Siéyès) the idea of a *constitutional jury*. He also says (p. 275): "I was little inclined to assist in the erection of an edifice which appeared to me builded upon sand, as it had not religion for its foundation."

It sat on the 17th of *Floréal* and onwards. Its sessions opened at eight in the morning and lasted until five in the afternoon, without intermission. Baudin, Daunou, Creuzé-Latouche, La Revellière-Lépeaux, Lanjuinais, and Lesage were the most assiduous members. Among the publicists who submitted their ideas Roederer was prominent, and was admitted to the sessions. Siéyès was consulted : "You would not listen to me," he said, and reserved himself for the public debate.

Thibaudeau, without offering any proof, says that the Commission included a monarchist party, composed of Lesage, Boissy d'Anglas, and Lanjuinais. "For all that," he adds, "they were not *Bourbonniens*"; meaning, of course, that he regarded them as Orléanists. The opinions of the aged Durand-Maillane went for nothing. La Revellière says that Durand-Maillane used to tremble at the idea of meddling with a Constitution so dear to the redoubtable Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and that after the insurrection of *Prairial* he was so much afraid that the Commission saw him no more. Berlier, according to the same witness, was the only member whose language was consistently democratic.

"From the first day of our sitting," says La Revellière, "we agreed, almost unanimously, that there could be no question between us of organic laws, nor of the Constitution of 1793, but that we must prepare the outline of a reasonable Constitution. . . ." "The Commission decided, unanimously," says Thibaudeau, "to put the Constitution of 1793 aside."

Was the Commission so ready as La Revellière

Had he really these scruples? Is it even certain that he expressed them? I do not know that we can consider his memoirs, which were posthumous, as entirely authentic. On this subject see an article by M. Mathieu, entitled "Some Letters of Durand-Maillane's," in the review *La Révolution française* (vol. xxxix. pp. 289–333).

believed (the above was written under the Revolution) to reject the Constitution of 1793? Would it have dared to do so as early as *Floréal?* Certainly there was, from that date, in certain of the sections, a change of feeling unfavourable to democracy. On the 1st and the 25th of *Floréal* the sections of Butte-des-Moulins, Mont Blanc, and the République, presented at the bar petitions directed against the "decemviral Constitution."[1] On the other hand, however, the democrats, with the active co-operation of the faubourgs, were preparing for an insurrection more serious than that of *Germinal*. The issue of the coming conflict seemed highly uncertain; so that it is by no means probable that the Commission of Eleven would at this moment have had the audacity to irritate the democrats by rejecting the Constitution of 1793, especially as it had no mandate which would permit it to do so.[2]

Had it formed so grave a determination it would have been known at the time, and the insurgents of *Prairial*, who rose not only to obtain bread, but to maintain democracy, of which the Constitution of 1793 was a symbol, would not have failed to demand that measures should be taken against the Commission. Nothing of the kind occurred. Surrounded and besieged, the Con-

[1] *Moniteur*, reprint, vol. xxiv. pp. 268, 269, 462. The section of Butte-des-Moulins (the 1st of *Floréal*) demanded definitely that the Convention should destroy the faulty portions of the Constitution without referring to the people.

[2] It must be noted, however, that there had been some question of giving it such a mandate. At the session of the 12th of *Floréal* of the year III, Lanjuinais said, from the tribune: "Let us speak straightforwardly, and discuss openly what is being said, or at least murmured, throughout the Republic: we have far less need of the organic laws of the Constitution than of a Constitution. Yes, your Committee of Seven [*sic:* he means the Committee of Eleven] must give you a Constitution" (*Journal des débats et décrets*). These words created a great sensation, but he did not formulate them in a motion: the Convention did not vote on the matter.

vention, on the 2nd of *Prairial*, was negotiating with the insurgents, persuading them to withdraw by promising—what? That the Commission, no later than the 25th, would come forward with the "organic laws" of the Constitution of 1793. If the insurgents contented themselves with such a promise, must it not have been universally known that the Commission had not as yet decided to reject the Constitution?

It was only when the democratic insurrection was definitely put down, on the 3rd and 4th of *Prairial*, that a change took place; if not a change of opinion, at least a change of plan.

The people of the faubourgs had attempted to bring about a new 31st of May, a new 2nd of June; to make themselves masters of Paris, the Convention, the whole country in fact, and to re-establish the dictatorship of the Commune of Paris. They had borne the head of the deputy Féraud on a pike. On June 2nd a popular army had surrounded the deputies and threatened them with death. Democracy re-appeared in the dreadful likeness of the Red Terror. The Convention had been stricken with fear.

On the other hand, this insurrection was defeated, crushed. The people of the faubourgs were disarmed. There was nothing more to be feared from them; their leaders were imprisoned.

It was then that the Convention, without avowing as much, even, it may be, without admitting as much to itself at the outset, decided to revenge itself upon democracy by renouncing it, and by rejecting the Constitution by which it was organised. It indulged in a free criticism of that Constitution from the tribunes.[1] Without any special decree, by the mere march of events, the mandate of the Commission of Eleven suffered a change, it was then that it began, agreed as it was to reject

[1] See, for instance, the *Opinion de Joseph Terral, député du Tarn, sur les défectuosités de la Constitution de 1793, Prairial, an III.*

the Constitution of 1793,[1] to elaborate not the organic laws, but a new Constitution, based upon a system of property suffrage.

Daunou was the most prominent in drafting the proposal, but the duty of reporting it to the Convention was confided to Boissy d'Anglas ; doubtless on account of the prestige which he had acquired by his admirable conduct on the day of the 1st of *Prairial*.[2]

This report was read before the Convention at the session of the 5th of *Messidor* of the year III. The discussion upon the first reading began on the 16th, and continued until the 25th of *Thermidor*. The discussion upon the second reading took place from the 26th to the 30th of *Thermidor*. The Constitution as a whole was adopted on the 5th of *Fructidor;* the people in the primary assembly accepted it on the 20th of *Fructidor* and the following days ; and it was proclaimed as the fundamental law of the Republic on the 1st of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV.

## II.

The essential characteristic of this Constitution was the suppression of the system of democracy established on August 10, 1792. Universal suffrage was replaced by a property-owners' suffrage, and conditions of eligibility were established ; in fact, the *bourgeois*

[1] The unanimity of this revolution was officially attested by the reporter or spokesman of the Commission, Boissy d'Anglas, who expressed himself as follows in his report of the 5th of *Messidor:* "We all assure you with one voice that this Constitution is nothing else than the organisation of anarchy, and we expect of your wisdom, patriotism, and courage, that instead of allowing yourselves to be abused by vain words, you will first immolate your tyrants, and then bury their odious work in the same tomb."

[2] La Revellière says that in doing him this honour it was intended to disarm or neutralise his hostility towards any kind of republican Constitution.

*régime* which had been adapted to the monarchy between 1789 and 1792 was now adapted to the Republic.

What theoretical arguments were put forward to cover the exclusion of the poor from the State politic? Du Pont (of Nemours) wrote at this period, in his *Observations sur le projet de Constitution:*

"It is obvious that the owners of land or property, without whose consent no one in the country can either lodge or eat, are its citizens *par excellence.* They are sovereigns *by the grace of God,* of nature, of their labours, of their position, and of the labours and position of their ancestors." [1]

Boissy d'Anglas said, in his report:

"We ought to be governed by the best; the best are the most highly educated, and those most interested in the maintenance of the laws. Now with very few exceptions you will only find such men among those who, possessing a freehold, are attached to the country which contains it, the laws which protect it, and the tranquillity which preserves it, and who owe to their property and their affluence the education which has fitted them to discuss with justice and understanding the advantages and disadvantages of the laws which determine the fate of their country. . . . A country governed by freeholders is in a social condition; a country in which the non-proprietors govern is in a state of nature."

Historical arguments were, however, the most frequent. Democracy, in France at all events, had governed ill: this was the reason for desiring to deprive the poor man of the right of suffrage. When Boissy

[1] We read in the *Gazette française* of the 2nd of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV: "In all civilised associations society is composed solely of freeholders. The rest are only proletariats, who, included in the class of supernumerary citizens, are awaiting the time when they too may succeed in acquiring a freehold. These principles, which are the basis of all political bodies at present existing on the earth, have by us been entirely ignored during the last five years. During this period the landowners have been incessantly persecuted, and every effort imaginable has been made to put the *sans-culottes* in their place."

d'Anglas asserted that non-proprietors "would excite, or allow to be excited, all manner of disturbances without fearing the result, and would establish, or allow to be established, disastrous taxes on commerce and agriculture," he was doubtless thinking of the *sans-culottes* and the "maximum." Lanjuinais, on the other hand, was thinking of the people's clubs of the year II, of the sections, and of political expedients of a communistic nature, when he upheld the property suffrage (on the 21st of *Messidor*) as a means of salvation from "the reign of the one-and-eightpenny men," as one may call them, "the men of the forty sous," "the drones who consume the honey gathered by the diligent bee." The example of America was instanced. As early as *Prairial* of the year III, Vaublanc, in the *Réflexions* which he submitted to the Convention through the medium of Bresson (of Vosges), spoke as follows: "After the example of the wise Americans, who were the first to proclaim the rights of man, be sure to demand the possession of property of the members of one of the two chambers of the Legislature." He also advised that the members of the primary assemblies should be taxpayers.[1]

The spectacle of the Terrorist, the Robespierrist democracy, had disgusted the Convention with the democratic system of government. The impulse to proscribe universal suffrage was almost unanimous. When it was

[1] *Réflexions sur les bases de la Constitution, par le citoyen* ***, *présentées à la Convention Nationale par Bresson, Prairial* of the year III. Vaublanc also invokes the example of America as against the Constitution of 1793: "Observe the wise Americans: did they call a single one of the parties to the Union a *democratic republic?*"—Vaublanc's ideas created a sensation, if we credit the *Messager du soir* of the 2nd of *Messidor,* which reads as follows: "*Have you read Vaublanc?* Such is the question of the day; in the cafés and literary *cabinets,* in the sections, at the play, on the streets, and even in the *corps de garde,* no one speaks with anything but a holy enthusiasm of the excellent plan of a Constitution attributed to this worthy citizen."

known, as it was in *Prairial*, that the Commission of Eleven had rejected universal suffrage there was hardly a sign of protest. I find one anonymous writer only, in an *Observation sur le droit de cité*, complaining of the decision. During the debate on the project of the Commission the democratic members of Convention confined themselves, for the most part, to demanding a lower qualification, without contesting the principle of the property suffrage. (See, for example, the speeches of Dubois-Crancé and Grégoire.) In the Convention I find only three apologists of universal suffrage : one a celebrated man—Thomas Paine : the other well known—Lanthenas : the third obscure—Julien Souhait.

On the 19th of *Messidor* of the year III Thomas Paine had read from the tribune the translation of a speech, which he had written in English, denouncing the contradictions between the principles of '89 and the property suffrage. The Convention grumbled, and no one rose to speak in support of Paine. Did not the example of the American constitutions, none of which admitted universal suffrage, refute the democratic advice of this American?

In his work on the *Droit de cité*, published in *Thermidor*, Lanthenas demanded the maintenance of universal suffrage on the ground that it would be impolitic to divide the State into classes which would be supposedly inimical to one another.

Was the *Opinion* of Julien Souhait (deputy for the Vosges) ever actually delivered? The journals make no mention of it ; but it was printed by order of the Convention. Souhait was the only Montagnard who, in the course of this anti-democratic movement, opposed himself forcibly to the establishment of a *bourgeois* Republic. He was clearly in favour of universal suffrage, for here is a proposed decree of his : " All citizens, without any distinction of rich or poor, are permitted to vote in the primary and electoral assem-

blies." He proceeds, not without emphasis, to expound his principles. His historical arguments are more interesting :

"This class of men whom we call proletariats is full of enthusiasm for the common liberty. Who was it that conquered our foreign enemies? Who shed their blood on the hills of the Argonne, at Jemmapes, in the Pyrenees, at Fleurus, on the Alps, on the Rhine? Who covered France with the laurels of victory, and engraved her name on the tablets of immortality? It is true that other citizens also played their part in this astonishing harvest of glory : but what is it that enables a man to disdain death, if it is not misery? What could have caused so many prodigies, but the disdain of death, unhappiness, hope, and virtue?"

"And to come nearer home : who can deny that the Revolution was accomplished by the people? Certainly the initiative was due to the counsels of philosophy : but philosophy, without the might of the people, could only have evoked a beautiful illusion. The 14th of July and the 10th of August we owe chiefly to the class of indigent citizens. The contempt which covered them under the *ancien régime;* the unhappiness which torments mankind, incessantly driving them to change their condition ; the sensibility to the misfortunes of his fellows so natural to the unfortunate ; their utter alienation from the graces of the Court, and from the advantages which the rich and privileged obtain from their misfortunes ; the feeling for Nature, strongest in the class nearest her affections and her laws ; the enthusiasm for liberty and equality, the sweetest consolation of misfortune, the strongest passion of men repelled by insult and public scorn ; all these impel the poor man towards the overthrow of despotism, and his efforts have been all the more terrible, because, having nothing to lose nor to hope for, no consideration could avail to check his onslaught. Has he to-day shed so much blood, won so many battles, suffered so many trials and privations, only to fall back into slavery, and to see his rights rapt from him by those very men whose power and whose liberty he has ensured?"

Farther on, in speaking of the establishment of universal suffrage on August 10th, he resumes :

"What abuses resulted from this return to nature, to justice? By commingling all hearts and minds in one sole impulse, we overthrew the throne, expelled the enemy from the heart of the country, and founded the Republic. Everywhere almost the popular choice

was superior to the result of the preceding elections. What stronger motives could we have for maintaining this politic and salutary law?"

He instances Condorcet, who "considered that a government was powerful and tranquil only in proportion to the mass of individuals interested in defending it," and he adds, with a very just sense of the future:

"To deprive a great class of individuals of the rights of a citizen, so far from assuring the liberty of the rest, will most obviously endanger it, by delivering that class into the hands of the first ambitious man who cares to make use of their discontent in order to ensure his own domination, and by anarchy to subjugate the public liberty."

To the reproach of Babeuvism levelled against the democrats he replies as follows:

"The poor man the enemy of the rich! Would he be, of his own accord? Condemned, by his needs, to labour, does he not know that the wealth, the interest, and the pleasures of the rich are his principal resources, and that without wealth only too many of those whose limited faculties are incapable of important speculations would perish of starvation?"

No one replied to this apology for universal suffrage, which passed (it would seem) unobserved. When the decree excluding the poor was carried, neither from the democratic press, nor the workmen of the faubourgs, nor what remained of the people's clubs, was there any protest, individual or organised. The police reports contain no evidence of discontent, if we except the remarks of a few idlers of the cafés. The suppression of universal suffrage was hardly remarked by contemporaries. Decided upon almost unanimously, we may say that the French people were unanimous in accepting or in suffering it: so far from popularity had fallen the democrats of the year II, and so complete was the defeat of the democratic party in *Prairial*.

## III.

Let us now consider how the property suffrage, the foundation of the new *bourgeois* Government, was organised by the Constitution of the year III.

Let us, at the outset, remark that the practice of the election of the principal officials by the citizens was maintained. The Constitution enacted that the primary assemblies should nominate the justices of the peace and the municipal officers, and that the electoral assemblies should appoint the members of the Legislature (which in turn would elect the executive Directory), the members of the Court of Cassation, the grand-juries, the departmental administrators, the President, Public Accuser, and clerk of the Criminal Court, and the judges of the civil tribunals.

But what Frenchmen would be citizens?

The proposal of the Commission of Eleven demanded that in order to be a French citizen a man must be upwards of twenty-one years of age, must be inscribed on the civic register of his canton, must have been domiciled, since registration, for one year within the bounds of the Republic, and he must pay some kind of direct tax, whether personal or levied on land or property.[1] Those Frenchmen alone were excepted from this condition who had served through one or several campaigns which had as their object the establish-

[1] With reference to the matter in hand, and as an example of the distortion of memory by time, I will cite this passage from the *Mémoires* of Thibaudeau (vol. i. p. 182), which deals with the internal debates of the Commission of Eleven on the exercise of political rights: "Some, like Lesage and Lanjuinais, wished to subordinate the suffrage to the condition of paying a tax; Baudin, to that of being able to write, the others, to give equality the widest latitude. This advice prevailed." Not only did it not prevail, but it is not certain that any member of the Commission upheld universal suffrage. Thibaudeau, a member of that Commission, wrote his *Mémoires* after 1815, and published them in 1824.

ment of the Republic. As for the inscription on the civic register, young men would be obliged, from the year IX and onwards, to prove that they could read and write, and exercise some manual trade (among others, agriculture). Only "French citizens" could vote in the primary assemblies. The right to vote was suspended in the case of persons interdicted, demented persons, &c.; and in the case of "domestic servants on hire and performing household or personal services," and in the case of persons attached to any foreign corporation which should imply distinctions of birth or exact religious vows. All elections would take place by secret scrutiny.

The primary assemblies would elect the deputies to the Legislature directly (as well as the other functionaries who were previously nominated by the electoral assemblies).

In order to be eligible to the Legislature the candidate would be required to prove that he was possessed of real estate.

Besides the condition of eligibility, the Commission proposed others which applied not only to the deputy, but to almost all the elective and non-elective functions. These conditions constitute what was called the system of "graduality," of which the idea had long ago been presented by Mirabeau to the Constituent Assembly. These are the terms in which the system was proposed by the Commission of Eleven (in Articles 21 to 27 of the third part of its project):

"Public functions are distinguished by various degrees. Public functionaries of the first degree are the municipal administrators of cantons, communes, or arrondissements, the justices of the peace, their assessors, and the members of the Bureaux of Conciliation. All these functions, excepting those of the justices of the peace, are exercised gratuitously. Public functionaries of the second degree are the administrators of departments, the members of the civil courts, the presidents, public prosecutors, and clerks of the criminal courts. All these functions are salaried. Functions of the second degree, as

described in Article 23, can only be conferred upon citizens who have, during the space of two years, filled one of the functions described in Article 22.

"Citizens who for two years have exercised one of the public functions of the second degree are only eligible to the Legislature when they fulfil all the other conditions demanded by the present Constitution. General executive agents, ambassadors, commissaries attached to departmental administrations and to the courts of law, chief secretaries to the same administrations or courts of law, the commissaries of the National Treasury, the stewards and collectors of direct or indirect taxes, are eligible to the Legislature after holding their commissions for six years. The conditions prescribed by the three preceding articles will come into force only from the ninth year of the Republic. Every citizen who has or who shall have fulfilled, up to that period, in virtue of election in electoral or primary assembly, any public function of the superior degrees, shall be eligible to the Legislature without being obliged to pass through the lower degrees."

Such was the project of the Commission of Eleven for the organisation of the new electoral system, based on a property suffrage.

On this project the Convention imposed the following alterations :

It did not accept the system of direct election. It re-established the departmental electoral assemblies ; in other words, the secondary or indirect suffrage.

It mitigated the property qualification of the elector in the first degree, the member of the primary assembly, by granting the new "passive" citizens a facility which the old passive citizens, under the monarchy, had requested in vain : the faculty of becoming active citizens by the voluntary payment of a personal tax, which tax was assessed as the local value of three days of agricultural labour.[1]

It suppressed the property qualification for eligi-

[1] The idea of paying for the privilege of voting, instead of getting paid for one's vote (as long as the laws allow of such proceedings), so utterly foreign to the republican spirit as we know it in America, and to the old (and modern) English practice, forms a striking commentary upon the genuine and democratic public spirit underlying the Revolution.—[TRANS.]

bility to the Legislature, as the Constituent Assembly had suppressed it in the decree (not applied) which it issued at the end of its career; but it increased—again following the example of the Constituent Assembly—the anti-democratic and *bourgeois* character of the new electoral system by deciding that no one could be nominated as an elector in the second degree unless he united the requirements of being at least twenty-five years of age, and of being (in communes of more than 6,000 inhabitants) the proprietor or life-tenant of a property estimated to be of an annual value equal to the local value of two days of labour ;[1] or he must be the tenant of a dwelling-house of annual value equal to the value of 150 days of labour, or of an agricultural property of annual value of 200 days of labour. In communes whose population was under 6,000 the qualification was less severe.

To the conditions of eligibility which did not refer to the owning or holding of property (such as the requirement that candidates for the Council of Five Hundred must be thirty years of age, and candidates for the Council of Elders forty years), the Convention added the condition that candidates must either be married men or widowers : but on a second reading it applied this condition only to members of the Council of Elders.

It rejected the system of " graduality " of functions.

It settled on the year XII, instead of the year IX, as the period at which the condition of being able to read and write and exercise a mechanical calling would be required of citizens.

To sum up : the Constitution of the year III suppressed universal suffrage; granted the right of suffrage in the first degree (admission to the primary assemblies) only to citizens who should pay a tax ; admitted as electors of the second degree none but

[1] The Commission proposed 400 days.

citizens in easy circumstances—proprietors, tenants, or farmers; demanded, for the future, conditions of literacy; based the new electoral right on fortune and capacity; and in general so ordered matters that the nation, considered as a body politic, resided in the *bourgeoisie*.

## IV.

We have seen what the electoral system was as proposed by the Commission of Eleven, and what portion of it was adopted by the Convention. The public discussion whence issued the definitive text of that part of the Constitution offers several points of interest to the student of political theory.

Thus the Convention was almost unanimous in rejecting the condition of the freehold as proposed by the Commission. The principle recommended by the speakers in the debate was as follows: a citizen must possess *something*, must enjoy a certain competence, in order that he may offer guarantees of his civic capacity: but his property need not perforce take the form of land. Lanjuinais, Bailleul, and others protested, on the 21st of *Messidor*, against the accusation brought against them of having designed to establish an aristocracy of landholders. Delahaye nevertheless proposed, but unsuccessfully, that one of the two Chambers should be composed "entirely of landowners, and the other constituted according to the talents and virtues, no other title of eligibility or exclusion being recognised."

One of the questions most keenly debated was the question of direct or indirect suffrage. Formerly the demand for direct suffrage was one of the articles of the democratic programme. The democrats claimed that the direct suffrage would enable the people more fully to exercise its sovereignty. In the year III the

question no longer took this form. The Commission, and the supporters of the direct suffrage, objected to the system of electoral assemblies because they thought these assemblies were too strongly influenced by the population of the cities in which they met. A direct suffrage would be less urban in character and would result in a wiser choice. To this the advocates of the system of indirect suffrage replied, that the selections of the electoral assemblies would be more intelligent and less impulsive; and this consideration gained the day.

The condition that the voter should be able to read and write was sustained by arguments from experience; men recalled the tyranny of the illiterate *sans-culottes*. In this measure we see an excellent means of accelerating the progress of public education. One deputy, however, Faure (of Seine-Inférieure), was opposed to this condition. He did not wish the Convention to concern itself with the education of the people; he wished "the departments to be left to deal with public instruction." He took no pains to hide his aversion to the schemes for educating the people. The Commission had recommended that the condition of being able to read and write should be exacted in the year IX. "I warn you," said Faure, "that if you try to create a people of learned men and women the Republic will not last nine years. You will have a nation of philosophers and stockjobbers, thanks to your dreams of public instruction, but never a ploughman, never a thresher of corn, never a labourer will be left."[1] Faure, however, was alone in these expressions of distrust of "dreams of public instruction."

We have seen that three members of Convention only demanded the maintenance of universal suffrage. One alone raised the "feminist" question: Rouzet (of

[1] *Touche légère sur la Constitution des Onze*, by P. J. D. G. Faure (of Seine-Inférieure).

Haute-Garonne), who demanded the suffrage for women without demanding universal suffrage.[1] Lanjuinais, at the session of the 21st of *Messidor* of the year III, opposed the suggestion :

"We shall reply by asking, Where is the goodwife who dare maintain that the wish of her husband is not her own ? The husband, in covenanting for himself, necessarily covenants for her who is one with himself. No ; women are destined to another kind of glory, perhaps more brilliant : they are called to form from the cradle souls in which all the republican virtues shall shine ; their model is the mother of the Gracchi."

The debate on the "graduality of functions" was among those in which was evinced most plainly the reaction against the idea of the Robespierrists : that the people are naturally good, naturally capable. Berlier said :

"Is not the man who has never exercised a public function of the first degree unfit for superior employment ? Can he know without having learned ? And may not, indeed should not, the social body demand, as a guarantee, this political novitiate, which, with ability, will carry life and heart into every branch of the political system ?" "Lanjuinais," says the *Moniteur*, "insisted on the danger of admitting to the important duties of a representative of the people, men who know everything in their private studies, but nothing at all in practice. He laid stress on the instance of the host of inept persons who have only too often, since the Revolution, insinuated themselves into all kinds of public positions, with nothing more in their favour, no further title, than an abundance of quackery and no true talent."

The opponents of "graduality," especially Thibaudeau,[2] complained of the restriction of the exercise of

[1] *Vues civiques sur la Constitution*, by Rouzet.

[2] Same session (see *Moniteur*, vol. xxv. p. 311). After the event experience suggested other arguments that the adherents of "graduality" might have employed. La Revellière-Lépeaux, in his *Mémoires* (vol. i. p. 231), has the following : "It would have produced one very good result ; it would have forced the military to aspire to civil functions, and no longer to regard themselves the superiors of those that exercise them. The purely military spirit, so disastrous to morality

popular sovereignty in matters of choice which ought not to be circumscribed, and the aristocracy of functionaries.

This is a brief summary of what was most notable in the debates on the right of suffrage.

## V.

How was the legislative power organised which was based upon this property-holders' suffrage?

There was a "Legislative Corps" composed of a "Council of Elders" of 250 members and a "Council of the Five Hundred," each renewable every year by one-third of its strength; but so that no member could perform his duties for longer than six consecutive years. The laws were made by the Legislative Corps. The proposition of laws pertained exclusively to the Five Hundred. Once voted by this Council, a proposed law was called a "resolution." If the Council of Elders approved this resolution it became law. If the resolution were rejected by the Elders, it could be presented again only after the lapse of a year; but the Council of Five Hundred could at any time present a proposal containing articles which had been included in a rejected "resolution." Thus the Council of Elders, although it could only approve or reject a resolution as a whole, could indirectly provoke amendments to a projected law. No proposition could be originated in the Council of Elders, but it had the right to change the locality of the Legislative Corps by an irrevocable decree.

The Legislative Corps was permanent, with the right of adjourning at will; but neither Council could

and to liberty, would thus be absorbed by the public spirit. The Army would no longer have been a nation within a nation, regarding itself as the sole proper recipient of authority, glory, and reward, and as having interests separate from those of the social body."

adjourn for more than five days without the consent of the other. The two Councils were situated always in the same commune, but could in no case meet in the same hall. Each had police rights in its place of assembly and in the outer precincts which they had determined. The Executive Directory could not bring or maintain troops within 6,000 metres (about 36 miles) of the commune in which the Legislature held its sessions, save upon its requisition or with its authorisation, and there was a bodyguard of not less than 1,500 men taken from the stationary National Guard of all the departments, and chosen by their brothers in arms.

The Constitution determined the internal procedure of the two Councils. Each member received an annual salary of the value of 3,000 myriagrammes of wheat—about 30 tons.

Sessions were public, but the members of the public present might not exceed in number one-half the strength of either Council ; and the minutes of the sessions were to be printed.

On the demand of 180 of its members either Council could form itself into a secret General Committee ; but only for discussion ; not for deliberation.

Presidents and secretaries were elected for a month.

Each Council had police rights over its members ; rights of censure, arrest for eight days, and prison for three days.

Special Commissions might be formed, but no permanent Committee.

Voting was not by the tabulated ballot. Decisions were taken by members remaining seated or standing ; in case of doubt the roll was called, but the votes were then secret.

In the Council of Five Hundred each proposition was given three readings, except in cases of declared urgency ; and the interval between any two readings might not be less than ten days.

In the same way the Elders considered the resolutions submitted to them three times, the interval between any two readings being at least five days. If the "resolution" had been voted by the Five Hundred after a declaration of urgency, the Elders approved or rejected the declaration, and in cases of rejection did not deliberate on the subject of the resolution.

No member of the Legislature could be called to account, accused, or tried for anything he might have said or done in the exercise of his functions. Members might be handed over to the High Court for criminal actions, treason, embezzlement, conspiring to overthrow the Constitution, and attempts against the internal security of the Republic; but unless discovered in the act their trial must be proposed by the Five Hundred and decreed by the Elders.

Such was the organisation of the legislative power by the Constitution of the year III.

The characteristic peculiarity of this organisation was the establishment of two Chambers, the adoption of the bicamerism which under the Constituent Assembly had been proposed by the monarchical party, and rejected because the Assembly naturally did not favour an upper Chamber in which the old nobility might have established its influence. Since then the single Chamber had been one of the unquestioned principles of the democratic programme.

In the year III this principle was abandoned, for theoretical reasons partly, but chiefly for practical reasons based on experience.

Boissy d'Anglas, in his report, expressed the most valid of the theoretical reasons when he declared that the two Chambers were requisite so that the laws might be elaborated after due reflection. "The Council of the Five Hundred," he said, "will be the thought, and, so to speak, the imagination of the Republic; the Council of Elders (*Anciens*) will be its reason."

He also laid very great stress on the arguments based on experience, and what we may call the historical arguments. He cited the example of America: "Nearly all the Constitutions of these States," he said, "our seniors in the career of liberty, have divided the Legislature into two Chambers; and the result has been public tranquillity. Pennsylvania alone did for some time adhere to a single Chamber; but in spite of the purity of the manners of its inhabitants, the simplicity of their customs, and their private virtues, intestinal troubles divided them, and Pennsylvania was forced to follow the example of her sister States." [1]

But it was principally native experience, the example of the Convention itself, that decided the majority to abandon the one-Chamber system. Men forgot that the unity of the Convention had assured the unity of the national defence; or perhaps it seemed rather that the very success of the national arms permitted, now that normal circumstances were at hand, the abandonment of the abnormal means which had made that success possible. It was remembered that the Convention had been subjected by the Commune of Paris; by the Mountain; by Robespierre. Men said that had there been two Chambers no such dictatorship could have established itself. They saw retrospectively in the single Chamber the chief means of the Jacobin and Terrorist tyranny. Even those members of Convention who criticised the project of the Commission, such as Lakanal, Bordas, and Eschassériaux, accepted the

[1] It must not be supposed that Boissy was the first to cite the two-chamber system of America. Not only in the Convention, but out of it, in the journals and in pamphlets, the American system was held up for admiration and imitation. See the enthusiastic eulogy in Lamare's *Équipondérance*. Thibaudeau says in his *Mémoires* (vol. i. p. 182): "The Commission made no pretence of being wiser than the founders of the American Republic." Vaublanc also praised the system in the work already cited in section II.

fundamental principle, and recognised that recent experience went to prove: "that there can be no stable Constitution where the Legislature consists of one single assembly." I believe I am correct in saying that not a single Montagnard speaker rose to protest against the second Chamber. This protest was left to a Moderate, Deleyre, who at the session of the 30th of *Messidor* denounced the proposal of the Commission as tending to royalism.

"The establishment of two Chambers," he said, "is still, as it was at the first, the secret desire of all our enemies, of kings, nobles, and priests, who love to resuscitate gods and kings and once more set them over the nations. The two Chambers form a seminary of aristocracy, the worst of tyrannies; for the tyranny of many is two hundred times heavier than that of one."

This protest was unique, and found no echo. Politicians were almost unanimously in favour of the two-Chamber system.

This system was organised in such a way as to forestall all objections; and especially this, that the two Chambers might be hostile and opposed to one another. The idea was rejected of two powers at equilibrium, counterpoised, as the two English Chambers. Regarding this conception Siéyès said, on the 2nd of *Thermidor:*

"It is a just comparison, that of two horses harnessed to the same carriage, each trying to pull in a contrary direction; they remain in one place, despite their plunges in the collar and their trampling, unless the royal coachman mounts the box to pull them straight; but we want no royal coachman."

It was thought that this defect had been avoided by giving each of the two Chambers the same electoral origin, and by making them collaborate successively in a definite phase of legislative construction.[1] But

[1] One at least thought differently. Eschassériaux suggested that the two sections of the Legislature should be formed "each every

what if the Council of Elders were obstinately to reject a popular and useful measure? What if one of the two Councils were to violate the Constitution? How would peace be re-established? How would the law be maintained? Siéyès, in the course of debate (on the 2nd and 13th of *Thermidor*), proposed the establishment of a supreme political body, which he called a Constitutional Jury. The Commission of Eleven accepted his proposal in principle and presented it, in an amended form, to the Convention, which rejected it; less for theoretical reasons than because it did not seem to offer, either as Siéyès proposed it or as amended by the Commission, any practical means of execution. The Convention also rejected a proposal of Gleizal's, recommending the establishment of a Council of Censors, who would say the last word in the case of disagreement between the two Chambers. Consequently the Constitution included no solution of the question of adjusting possible disagreements between the two Councils.

Among the methods of organising the legislative power which were proposed in the course of the debates, that of Siéyès was the most remarkable. He suggested the establishment of four assemblies: Firstly, under the name of the *Tribunate*, "a body of representatives three times as numerous as the departments; whose special mission would be to watch over the requirements of the people, and to propose to the Legislature any law, regulation, or measure that it might consider useful." Secondly, under the name of the *Government*, another "body of representatives, seven in number, whose special mission would be to watch over the needs of the people and matters pertaining to the execution of the laws, and to propose to the Legislature any law, regulation, or measure that it might consider useful."

three months by drawing lots," and that they should take turns in initiating laws. See his *Opinion*.

Thirdly, under the name of the *Legislature*, a third "body of representatives, nine times as numerous as the departments, whose special mission it would be to judge and pronounce on the proposals of the *Tribunate* and those of the *Government*." Fourthly, a fourth body of representatives, the *Constitutional Jury*, of which I have spoken. Siéyès called this establishing a representation of all the powers; and his explanations, though detailed, seem ingenious rather than practical. The Convention, after a respectful discussion, rejected the scheme, which the public would hardly have comprehended.

Siéyès was not alone in proposing more than two legislative assemblies. Rouzet suggested four: the Ephors, the Legislature, and the Areopagitus.

The debates prove one thing unmistakably: that there was a general and firm intention of ensuring that the future Legislature should not be under the thumb of Paris. Neither in the proposal of the Commission, nor in the text as passed by the Convention, was it stated in what city the two Councils were to sit. It was decreed merely that they should sit "in the same commune." Even this provision was not voted without discussion: a minority wished the Councils to sit in different communes. Faure (of Haute-Loire) expressed as follows the drawbacks of allowing both Councils to sit in the same commune:

"These two Councils, carried away despite themselves by the force of public opinion, will be dominated by the same spirit, a spirit equally alien to them both; the spirit which forms itself at private meetings, in the clubs, at the theatres, on the promenades, in cliques, &c. All doors will be open to intrigue and ambition. We shall once more see, under other names, the Jacobins, the Feuillants, a *Club de Chartres*, a *Club de Réunion*, &c. The leaders of the two Councils (for there will be leaders for a long time yet) will meet there, and have all things their own way; will debate, deliberate, and even decide upon political measures; while those modest and virtuous men whose only meeting-places will be the halls of their assemblies and their own lodgings will

eventually become the dupes of all these schemes and conspiracies, of which they will know nothing. We have already had mournful experience of such a state of affairs. Do not let us place these two Councils in the same orbit, unless we wish the same whirlwind to sweep them away. Supposing that one of them resisted the other: its resistance would be called obstinacy; passion and audacity would be styled virtue. Thus whichever Council was strongest in numbers and supporters would involve the other in ruin; either by paralysing it or by usurping its authority."[1]

André Dumont stated that if the Council of Elders were to reject a demagogic resolution, "its refusal would be the signal for a new 31st of May; or we should have the 12th of *Germinal* or the first days of *Prairial* over again." The Convention thought the chances of conflict would be augmented if one of the Councils, for example, were to sit in Paris and the other at Versailles; and that if each were established in different surroundings they would soon become strangers to one another, divided both in spirit and in will.

## VI.

The executive power was delegated to a Directory of five members, of at least forty years of age. The Directory was appointed by the Legislature, which, for the purpose, fulfilled the functions of an electoral assembly, acting in the name of the nation. The Council of Five Hundred formed, by secret ballot, a tenfold list[2] of the number of members to be appointed to the Directory, and the Council of Elders, also by secret ballot, made a choice from this list. One of the five Directors was released each year by lot, and replaced; he could be re-elected only after an interval of five years.

The Directory was established in the same commune

[1] He even suggested that the Directory should reside in a third commune.

[2] The Commission had proposed a triple list.

as the legislative body. Its members, lodged at the expense of the Republic, received an annual salary fixed at the value of 50,000 myriagrammes of wheat (about 500 tons).

It had a guard of 120 infantry and 120 cavalry.

The directors had a uniform assigned to them, and were never to be seen without it during the exercise of their functions, "whether out of doors or in their own house." This measure, in Boissy d'Anglas' report, was put forward as a protest against *sans-culottisme*.

Each member was President of the Directory in turn for three months only.

The Directory did not act directly, but through Ministers, not less than six nor more than eight in number,[1] who were appointed and dismissed by the Directory itself. These Ministers did not constitute a Cabinet or Council.

The powers of the Directory were as follows: It promulgated the laws; it disposed of the armed forces; it could issue warrants of arrest in cases of conspiracy against the security of the State; it supervised and ensured the execution of the laws by the courts and administrations, by means of commissaries of its own appointment; besides appointing Ministers, it also appointed the commanders-in-chief of the armies, the overseers-in-chief of the department of indirect taxation, the receiver of the direct taxes of each department, the chief administrators of the national estates, and, in time of war, the public officials of the French colonies, excepting the Iles de France and the Ile de la Réunion. As for foreign relations, the Directory had the sole direction of diplomatic affairs; it drew up and signed all treaties, which the Legislature then examined and ratified; but secret treaties arranged by the Directory alone might be executed provisionally. Finally, the

[1] The law of *Vendémiaire* 10, year IV, determines the number as six and defines the duties of each Minister.

Legislature could only declare war upon the "definite and necessary" proposition of the Directory.

The Directory had no legislative powers whatsoever. It could only invite the Five Hundred, in writing, to take a certain matter into consideration; it could propose measures, but not in the form of drafted laws.

The powers of the Directory were most limited in matters of finance. Five commissaries of the National Treasury, appointed by the Legislature, and in no way dependent on the Directory, were entrusted with the supervision of the receivership of the national revenue, and with the management of the funds and the payment of all public expenditures.

Members of the Directory could be sent before the High Court under the same circumstances as those already noted in relation to the deputies. The responsibility of the Directors, like that of the Ministers, was indicated, but not defined.

Let us see what arguments, what debates, resulted from this organisation of the executive power.

By no means every one was agreed as to the number and the title of the members of the executive. Let us see what Thibaudeau has to say of the debates on this subject which took place in the Commission:

"Baudin and Daunou were in favour of *two* supreme magistrates, or biennial consuls, one of whom should govern during the first year, and the other during the second. Lesage, Lanjuinais, and Durand-Maillane recommended one annual president; the rest, a council of at least *three* members. They ended by adopting *five*. Each member was in favour of this or that number, accordingly as he was more or less frightened of anything that might remind one of royalty."

The example of America was all in favour of a single president.

"I think," said Le Breton (of Ille-et-Vilaine), we might substitute for the Executive Council a president, chosen from the Council of Elders by the entire Legislature; elected president for two years, re-eligible for another two, and necessarily replaced after four years, and always

responsible. The Americans have such a magistrate, and the Americans are free."

A mixed system, foreshadowing the Consulate of the year VIII, was proposed by Poultier. He proposed a "supreme Directorate" of a President and three councillors.

"The President will have two votes, a double salary, and a double guard; he will appoint and receive ambassadors; he alone will be entrusted with diplomatic relations and will have sole charge of the Seal. His functions will last for two years; he will be replaced by one of the three councillors; he will immediately resume the quality of simple citizen, and will not be re-eligible until eight years have elapsed. The supreme Directorate will be renewed by one quarter every two years; it will have under its orders seven agents, who will be called secretaries of the Government, and whose powers will be limited by the Legislature."

The reason why the Convention did not follow any of these counsels, nor yet the example of America, was that it feared the President might take on the likeness of a king or dictator, and that the presidential armchair might remind the people of the royal throne; or that the President of the French Republic might become a new Robespierre. Accordingly the Convention easily came to an agreement that the directors should be five; although a few members would have preferred to see that number reduced to three.

The method of electing the Directorate was very fully discussed.

"There were practically only two alternatives to choose from," says Thibaudeau: "the choice, immediate or secondary, of the people, or that of the Legislature. The latter alternative triumphed. Louvet feared that otherwise the primary assemblies or their delegates might one day choose a Bourbon. The majority were actuated by the fear that the executive might be too powerful if it were based on popular election."

Eschassériaux proposed to the Convention the following mode of appointing the Directorate: Each

departmental electoral assembly should propose a candidate ; the Council of Five Hundred should select twenty-five of these candidates ; and the Council of Elders would choose the directors from this list of twenty-five. Saint-Martin (of Ardèche) recommended a similar procedure, but reversed ; the electoral assemblies were to appoint the Directory from a list of candidates drawn up by the Legislature. Pénières proposed that eighty-nine candidates, elected by the electoral assemblies, should select the directors from among themselves. Villetard recalled that in Rome it was the people who appointed the consuls, and stated that there could be no democracy unless the people did so appoint its own officials. Mailhe successfully opposed these motions, by inquiring where in such a case would the national representation reside.

"Would it not exist in the Directory far more vitally than in the Legislative body? and what a powerful lever would this new idea afford ! Undoubtedly the Directory must be invested with a powerful authority, for any government that is not strong enough to ensure the execution of laws is no longer a government : it is an anarchy ; but what would the Republic become if the Directory were more powerful than the Legislature?"

As for the powers of the Directory, some would have had them more widely extended. It was even proposed to give it the right of veto ; Delahaye and Ehrmann were in favour of such a course. The latter proposed that the Directory should have the right to return any law to the Legislature, and that it should not then be forced to promulgate it unless each of the two Councils passed it anew by a majority of two-thirds. Lanjuinais delivered himself to the same effect. The Convention objected strongly ; it remembered the hated royal veto, and the preceding question was voted.

The articles relating to the organisation of the National Treasury, independently of the Directory, were

passed without opposition ; because by that course an existing condition of things was ratified ; an arrangement that had been maintained by reason of a long-established distrust of the executive power. Later on experience proved the inconvenience of such a situation. Under the Restoration La Revellière-Lépeaux wrote in his *Mémoires:*

"The Directory had no means of forcing the Treasury to deliver to the ministers the funds which, all formalities being fulfilled, they legitimately demanded. It was on this account that the Irish expedition miscarried, although Humbert had already landed and was making extraordinary progress. The Treasury had promised the minister of finances to send 10,000 francs to Brest, that sum being required for the despatch of an army corps. The Minister's request had been circumstanced by all the formalities exacted by the law. The Treasury ignored it, and no authority could compel it to comply. The English, who at the outset had not a single warship in the seas through which the French fleet was to sail, had time to receive warnings and to pit against us a greatly superior naval force, so that the expedition failed."

## VII.

The principal elements, the essential characteristics, of the Constitution of the year III were the organisation of the suffrage, and of the legislative and the executive powers. Among various other items of the Constitution, here are some which bear upon the political history of the Revolution :

Administrative and municipal institutions were modified, but not radically.

The division of France into departments was left unchanged, but the maintenance of the *status quo* was not unchallenged by the ballot. Sallengros demanded a rectification of departmental frontiers in such a way as to effect a more equal division of the population. Delahaye proposed the reduction of their number to thirty or forty.

There was a significant alteration in the nomenclature

of the departments. The Constituent Assembly had decided not to give the departments the names of cities or provinces. The only exceptions which it had made were those of Corsica and Paris. On August 11, 1793, Corsica was divided into two departments, called respectively *Golo* and *Liamone*. These divisions and these names were maintained by the Constitution of the year III. The department of Paris became the department of the Seine. "No privilege must be allowed to exist even in the most trivial things," said Boissy d'Anglas.

In reality men wished to efface even the memory of the preponderance of the city which had been responsible for the insurrection of May 31st.

The decree of the 28th of *Germinal* of the year III had re-established the departmental administrations as they had been before May 31st; the same in number and in powers; having each its procurator-syndic, but no representative of the central power to force it to keep step with the general proceedings of the Government; in a word, the conditions were again the conditions of anarchical independence which had led to Federalism, and which the decrees of the 14th of *Frimaire* of the year II had remedied. This was an act of retrospective vengeance against the Montagnards. But when the Convention had to manufacture a constitution, it had perforce to return to the centralising programme of the Mountain. It left the departmental administrations in possession of the attributions which were theirs by the laws then in force, but deprived them of their character of assemblies of a deliberative and also of an executive nature. There were no more councils nor directories, but only a "central administration," which was elected, composed of five members only, and renewed at the rate of one member each year. The executive Directory could annul the acts of these administrations, and provisionally suspend, dismiss, or replace their members. It appointed a commissary to

each one, whom it might dismiss, and who was instructed to "supervise and demand the execution of the laws."

The most noteworthy change was effected in the subdivision of the departments. The districts were suppressed.

The uselessness of these intermediary administrations as first organised had been pointed out from the beginning and also since then; but the reason of their suppression in the year III was not the remembrance of their original uselessness. The memory of the active part they had played at the time of their second organisation, when the decree of the 14th of *Frimaire* made them part of the machinery of the Revolutionary Government, and gave them a portion of the functions of the departments—the memory of their *rôle* as "agents of the Terror," was invoked against them now.

It was decided that there should be only one subdivision of the department: namely, the municipality.

The communes, however, were too numerous. Some seemed altogether too small to form a living unit; and this minute subdivision had prevented a serious organisation of municipal life in the country districts. The towns alone had formed real communes, having a real personality. On the other hand, circumstances had given these urban communes too great a power. Paris had ruled France. The cities of Lyons, Marseilles, and Bordeaux had exhibited a tendency in 1793 to form each a State within a State. Above all, the *bourgeois* republicans of the year III regarded these cities as breeding-places of the democratic spirit, nests of "anarchy" and "Terrorism." The authors of the new Constitution preferred to divide such communes as were too large and to unite such as were too small.

According to the Constitution, in communes containing more than 100,000 inhabitants there were established several elective municipal administrations, "in

such a manner that the population of the arrondisement of each municipality should not exceed 50,000 and should not be less than 30,000." In these communes a Central Bureau was established "for matters considered as indivisible by the Legislature," [1] the members of which, three in number, would be appointed by the administration of the department and confirmed by the executive power. In this way Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, and Bordeaux were governed; Paris being divided into twelve municipalities; Marseilles, Lyons, and Bordeaux into three.

The word *commune*, without being suppressed, was no longer associated with the idea of a municipality. Thus the Central Bureau of the Commune of Paris was called the "Central Bureau of the Canton of Paris."

The canton was in fact made the basis of the new municipal organisation, in order to increase or reduce, as the case might be, the importance of each municipal unit.

It was decided that "there should be at least one municipal assembly in each canton."

As in the old Girondist plan of a constitution, part of the municipal staff of the little communes was suppressed. In theory there was only one administration per canton, with an exception in favour of communes peopled by from 5,000 to 100,000 inhabitants, each of which would have a municipal administration to itself. In communes of less than 5,000 inhabitants there was a municipal agent and also an assistant, both elected, who had the standing of officers of the civil State. The assembly of the municipal agents of each commune constituted the municipality of the canton, the members of which were appointed for two years and renewed by one half each year.

The municipal administrations were strictly subordi-

[1] The police and matters of provisioning were declared indivisible by the law of the 19th of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV.

nated to the departmental assemblies, which could annul their decisions and suspend their members ; but neither suspension nor annulment could become final without the explicit confirmation of the executive Directory.

To each municipal as to each departmental administration the Directory attached a commissary.

This new administrative organisation was not established without opposition, especially that part of it relating to the commissaries by the executive Directory. They were stigmatised beforehand as petty tyrants, intendants, sub-delegates. Charles Delacroix demanded that at least they should be selected from candidates proposed by the electoral assemblies ; if, said he, "you are determined to deliver the simple inhabitants of the rural districts into the talons of these vultures who will come in the name of the Executive to devour their substance."

The example of America and the memory of the old distrust of the central power induced some to recall the decentralising system of 1790. It was Louvet, formerly denounced as a federalist, who opposed the American arguments : "If our system of the social pact resembled that of the United States of America ; if, as in that country, each of our departments formed a State apart, having its own legislation, finances, administration, and taxation, separate from those of its sister States ; itself satisfying its own needs, and forming, in short, a kind of independent State within the State," he imagined that the commissaries of the central power might be dispensed with. But the problem in hand was the administration of a "Republic one and indivisible," on one universal plane and with one set of laws ; and it was essential to ensure that the "spirit of locality" should not compromise the national unity. The Government commissaries were therefore indispensable. The old distrust of the executive power was

denounced by Daunou, who pointed out that it was no longer, as in 1790, a question of "disorganising the royal government," but one of organising the republican government; and by Thibaudeau, who protested against the insanity of always seeing in the executive power "a monster ready to devour liberty," and in the administrations the superintendents of this monster. "This inversion of ideas," he said, "has been produced by the system of provincial administrations, which as a matter of fact were established to represent the needs of each province, and to diminish the influence of despotic government."

In this manner the institution of the commissaries of the Directory was criticised and defended. The majority appeared convinced that without these agents no government would have been possible.

Such was the new administrative organisation. It established an intenser communal life in the small towns; it suppressed the unity of communal life in the great cities. It established the beginnings of centralisation.[1]

## VIII

I shall not attempt to mention all the matters dealt with by the Constitution of the year III, which was very long and full of detail, embracing in its 377 articles almost every department of public life.

Among the other divisions of this great body of fundamental laws are some, however, which give a good idea of the general drift of the whole. It is suffi-

[1] The law of the 21st of *Fructidor* of the year III determined the functions of the municipal and administrative bodies and of the commissaries of the executive Directory. The law of the 10th of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV established the internal police regulations of the communes. The law of the 19th of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV determined the territorial division of France, and the distribution and organisation of the judicial and administrative authorities.

cient to mention them, as they are well known ; I am speaking of the sketch of a system of national education (which was developed in the law of the 3rd of *Brumaire* of the year IV), the principle of the liberty of conscience, and the system of separation of Church and State.

The Declaration of Rights which prefaces it, and which is completed by the " general provisions " which terminate it, bears a strong resemblance to the Declaration of 1789, so literally is the latter reproduced at times. But it is more liberal and less democratic. More liberal, because religious liberty is substituted for tolerance, because the liberty of the press is more clearly defined, and because all preliminary censorship of writings is definitely prohibited, as well as all limitations or repressive laws (although provision is made for temporary suspension of the liberty of the press). Less democratic, in that the article of the Declaration of 1789 which stated that " men are born and remain free and of equal rights " is suppressed.[1] Why? Because this article would have permitted a demand for universal suffrage. " Civil equality," says Boissy d'Anglas, " is all that a reasonable man can demand." To be sure, equality is mentioned along with the other rights of man in society—liberty, security, property. But care has been taken to define equality, thus : " Equality consists in the fact that the law is the same for all, whether it punishes or protects." Political equality was thus suppressed, and in that way was avoided contradiction, which tripped the Constituent Assembly, when it proclaimed equality in general only immediately afterwards to suppress it in political life.

Another effect of this definition of equality was the avoidance of the socialistic inferences of the Declaration

[1] The Commission cancelled this article of their project. Defermon re-inserted it at the first reading ; at the second it disappeared.

of 1789. Even the "common happiness" was omitted, which the draft of the Commission had proposed as the end of society. The common happiness? Was not this Babeuf's formula? Did it not contain the agrarian law in embryo; did it not imply a supplementary social revolution?

Above all men cared no longer to speak of the right of insurrection which had been proclaimed in 1793. "The law," said the Declaration of 1789, "is the expression of the general will." But the Jacobins had pretended to express the general will. They had revolted—there had been risings everywhere—under the pretext of expressing the general will. "The law," said the declaration of the year III, "is the general will *expressed by the majority of the citizens or their representatives*."

Even thus amended some feared the Declaration might serve as a pretext for insurrection; so a Declaration of Duties was added as a corrective. Here are moral precepts which no man of 1793 would have disputed. "Do not do to others what you would not they should do to you. Always do to others the good you would wish to receive yourself." But the very existence of this Declaration is a protest against the Robespierrist dogma of the goodness and infallibility of the people. It is also a protest against socialism, for it states that all social order rests on the maintenance of property.

## IX.

If we run over the characteristic points of the Constitution of the year III we perceive that it was eminently the result of experience. Boissy d'Anglas in his report said:

"We have compressed six centuries into as many years. Let us hope that so costly an experience will not be lost on you. It is time to profit

by the crimes of the monarchy, the errors of the Constituent Assembly, the vacillations and evasions of the Legislative Assembly, the offences of the decemviral tyranny, the calamities of anarchy, and the miseries of civil war."

How many articles of this Constitution were indeed dictated by the recent memory of faults committed or miseries experienced ! There was always open the book of the errors into which men had lately fallen. Most clearly are to be seen the signs of the most recent experience : that of the excesses of democracy. It was forgotten that the democratic government had saved France ; men could see in it nothing but the hated face of Robespierre. There should never be another Robespierre ! Almost every line of the Constitution emits that cry.

Yet unconsciously the good point of the Robespierrist government was preserved : the fact of centralisation. What were the commissaries of the Directory but the national agents of the Terror?

The hatred of democrats forbade the preservation of democracy. A property-owners' suffrage was established ; a *bourgeois* Republic. It is the precise fact that this Constitution drove the proletariat out of the State politic, established the triumph of the *bourgeoisie*, and gave it a privileged position. It is not incorrect to say that from this point of view the Constitution of the year III was an effort of reaction.

However, we must believe that the makers of this Constitution did not intend to make such a reactionary effort, and did not realise that they were doing so.

Let us note, first of all, that they did not expressly denounce democracy ; they proposed to organise it the better, by replacing the reins of government in the hands of the true people, the free and enlightened people, who did not crouch in the darkness of ignorance and the slavery of poverty. On the other hand they sought the sanction for these changes from a plebiscite

of universal suffrage ; for the Constitution of the year III was submitted for acceptation to the old primary assemblies.[1]

Let us admit that in professing themselves to be democrats, while they were actually suppressing universal suffrage, they were hypocrites. Let us also admit that this plebiscite was merely a comedy. Yet it is none the less true that they were not guided by any real idea of reaction. On the contrary, they were convinced that the poor and ignorant would be the enemies of light and liberty, as they had proved before, so they considered, under Robespierre. In universal suffrage they saw not only an instrument of the agrarian revolution, but also an instrument of domination ready to the hands of kings, priests, nobles, and all reactionaries. They were sincerely convinced that no progress was possible save through the *bourgeoisie;* and by the word *progress* they understood the realisation of the rational ideal of the eighteenth century, of the principles of 1789. They initiated the realisation of this ideal by means of the Constitution itself ; by the establishment of a system of national instruction which should cure the French of superstition, and deliver them from the yoke of the Roman Church. Free thought they organised in the National Institute. They organised, as we should say, the secularisation of the State. These reactionaries? No, indeed ! They considered they were legislating as the heirs of the philosophers should. Whose name was incessantly invoked in their debates? That of Condorcet the freethinker. And who had forced the noble Condorcet to take his own life? The ignorant people ; the populace. In such wise had

[1] Law of the 5th of *Fructidor* of the year III. This law also enacted that the same original primary assemblies (namely, a universal suffrage) should elect the electors of the second degree in the first elections of the Legislature. In this way the transition from universal to the property-owners' suffrage was less violent, less felt by the people.

democracy rewarded the conceiver of universal suffrage, the apostle of the democratic Republic! Thus had democracy, in its triumph, turned its back upon the light, and persecuted the bearers of the sacred fire. To abolish the reign of the populace, precisely in the interests of the people itself; to abolish universal suffrage, which would lead men under the yoke of kings or priests or Terrorists; such was the motive of these supposed reactionaries, who, in admitting to the State politic only the more reasonable of mankind, wished to found upon reason the government of the State.

Their wisdom, however, which they thought was the child of experience, was troubled by unjust rancour and imaginary fears. Their retrospective views were limited and untrue. It is true that a Revolutionary Committee did prosecute Condorcet. But universal suffrage, realising Montesquieu's dictum as to the excellence of popular choice, had cunningly selected, at the time of the election of the Convention, the men who saved France. The entire mass of the French people had scarcely performed any political act besides in that election; and it proved to have discerned the capable men better than did the property-owners; better perhaps than Condorcet himself could have done.

What precisely will be the outcome of this *bourgeoisie*, so wise and prudent, so fired by ideals after four years of rule? It will deliver France into the hands of Bonaparte.

The *bourgeois* Republic, in which the people, by a plebiscite, abdicates its rights in favour of a class, will prove the forerunner of the plebiscitary Republic, in which the people will abdicate its rights in favour of a man.

## X.

Among those laws, organic or complementary, which were essential to the application of the Constitution of the year III, those which dealt with the accomplishment of the plebiscite and the first election of the members of the future Legislature are of prime historical importance. For a proper understanding of these laws it is necessary to remember that the Convention had decreed, on October 10, 1793, that the government would be revolutionary until the establishment of peace. Now, when the Constitution of the year III was passed by the Convention two treaties of peace had been concluded, to the glory of France, with Prussia and with Spain, to say nothing of smaller Powers ; but no general pacification had as yet been effected. France was still at war with England and with Austria. Did the Convention wait until the end of the war before applying the new Constitution? No ; for the independence and greatness of France were already assured ; France was no longer, as in the year II, a nation struggling for life. On the other hand, was it possible to govern in a normal fashion before a general peace had been concluded? Was there not reason to fear that completely free elections might destroy the Republic? The course was adopted of applying the Constitution, but of applying it incompletely ; or rather of combining a constitutional with a revolutionary government ; and this combination, established by the Constitution itself, was especially characteristic of the internal political history of the Directory and the *bourgeois* Republic.

On the 1st of *Fructidor* of the year III, in the name of the Commission of Eleven, Baudin (of the Ardennes) delivered a report on the means of terminating the Revolution. How often had men entertained the illusion that it was terminated?

"Thus some believed that everything was consummated by the overthrow of the Bastille on July 14, 1789; others regarded October 6th as the keystone of the arch; others again, thought the time had come successively on February 4, 1790, by means of a perfidious oath; on September 14, 1791, with an acceptance that was no more sincere; on August 10, 1792, with the fall of the throne; on June 2, 1793, with the eternal silence to which men hoped they had condemned all virtue."

The Constitution of 1793 was only a comedy. This time the hope was more serious, because men were considering a constitution "purged of all alliance with royalty and anarchy," and also because the national will was about to be seriously consulted.

This consultation it was necessary to arrange. It was impracticable to allow the 6,000 primary assemblies to analyse all the articles of the Constitution; the verification of the plebiscite would have been impracticable under such conditions. A "yes" or "no" was the reply required.

"But in whose hands shall this sacred trust be laid? You have constructed the vessel: who shall launch it? Who will set the sails, and what pilot will first hold the helm?" The premature abdication of the Constituent Assembly had proved that a new legislature, a government of novices, is not competent to enforce a constitution.

"You will be prepared to endure fresh mortifications, fresh perils, for the sake of preserving France from the evils that threaten her. . . . In the interest of the nation and for the sake of the Constitution it is our duty to retain two-thirds of the Convocation in the Legislature."

Baudin (of the Ardennes) ended by proposing a decree, which was finally voted on the 5th of *Fructidor*, in which we read: "All the members at present sitting in the Convention are re-eligible. The electoral assemblies *may not select less* than two-thirds of those members in forming the legislative body."[1] "Deputies

[1] The project of the Commission involved the creation in the Convention of a "jury of confidence" which would receive the resignations

against whom decrees of accusation or arrest are standing are not included in the number of members of Convention now sitting." It was after all universal, not restricted suffrage, that was to pronounce upon the Constitution, for "all Frenchmen who had voted in the last primary assemblies were to be admitted" to the vote. It was also by universal suffrage that the electors who were to appoint the deputies were to be elected for the first time, for these same primary assemblies who were to vote upon the Constitution were also to elect the electors.[1] The armies also were to vote on the subject of the Constitution. The plebiscite would be taken with respect to "the Constitution as a whole, to accept it or reject it." As for the method of voting, "each voter was to give his vote in the manner he preferred."

Against the decree enacting the return of two-thirds of the members of the Convention there was in Paris an extreme public feeling, which was to end in the insurrection of the 13th of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV. This feeling at first gave rise to the fear that the electoral assemblies would not consent to return the two-thirds. Baudin, moreover, on the 13th of *Fructidor*, proposed other measures, in a report which stated that "royalism, for the first time, was suddenly declaring

of members up to a number which would reduce the total number of the members to 500. If there were not sufficient resignations the desired reduction would be completed by lot. The project was discussed at great length (*Moniteur*, xxv. p. 536, *et seq.*). Delahaye demanded that the electoral assemblies should select two-thirds; Louvet, on the contrary, claimed that the Convention should select them. "In the electoral assemblies," he said, "who will protect the republicans?" Lakanal, who supported the project of the Commission, also expressed a fear lest royalism and fanaticism might take possession of the electoral assemblies. However, it was to these assemblies that the Convocation finally entrusted the task of choosing the two-thirds to be re-elected.

[1] But after this first occasion the electors had to fulfil the conditions of the suffrage determined by the Constitution.

itself as the ardent defender of the sovereignty of that very people it was burning to reduce to slavery." During the same session it was decreed that the electoral assemblies might elect the third whose choice was free only when they had elected the two-thirds they were bound to appoint from among the members of the Convention. But it might occur that the same members of Convention were elected in several different departments. The new law would obviate this defect as follows: "Each electoral assembly, independently of the two-thirds which it must elect at the outset, will draw up a supplementary list three times the length of the first, composed of members taken equally from the whole of the Convention." For example, the electoral assembly of the Seine, which had to appoint 18 deputies, had first of all to appoint the two-thirds of members of the Convention, that is, 12 deputies; then 36 members of the Convention to form the supplementary list, and finally 6 deputies to form the new third. If, in spite of these precautions, the number of 500 members of the Convention was not attained, those who would have been appointed would constitute themselves into an electoral assembly and complete their number.

The primary assemblies, convoked for the 20th of *Fructidor* of the year III, should have completed their operations by the 10th of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV. On the 1st of *Vendémiaire* the Convention decreed that the electoral assemblies were to assemble on the 20th of *Vendémiaire* and finish their business by the 29th at latest. In the same decree it was stated that the present members for Corsica and those for the colonies would provisionally continue their functions in the new Legislature. As they numbered 17, the electoral assemblies had finally to elect only 483 members of Convention.

## XI.

We have seen that the primary assemblies had to pronounce, at the same time, on the Constitution and the decrees of the two-thirds. As in 1793, the authorities hastened to proclaim the results before it was possible for them all to be known. As early as the 1st of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV, the Committee of Decrees, by the medium of Gomaire, informed the Convention that the "great majority" of the primary assemblies, namely 6,337, had sent in their *procès-verbaux*. Among these 6,337, there were 269 who had not stated the number of their voters. The others gave a total of 958,226 voters, of whom 18,326 belonged to the Army. Of these 958,226 known voters, 941,853 had accepted the Constitution, and 41,892 had refused it. (According to these figures there were most certainly 1,481 doubtful votes; but the reporter made no mention of them.) As for the decree of the two-thirds, out of 263,131 known voters (122 primary assemblies had not stated the number of voters) 167,758 had accepted the decrees, while 95,373 had voted against them (2,000 doubtful voters remained, of which the reporter said nothing). Having heard this report, the Convention decreed that the Constitution and the decrees were accepted and would become the law of the Republic.

A few days later (on the 6th of *Vendémiaire*) fuller results were published.[1] Out of 1,107,368 voters the Constitution was accepted by 1,057,390, and rejected by 49,978. Out of 314,282 voters the decrees were accepted by 205,498 and rejected by 108,784. Even yet these results were not final: for at that date it was impossible that all the *procès-verbaux* of the primary

[1] *Tableau du dépouillement et recensement du vœu des assemblées primaires et des armées de terre et de mer, sur la Constitution présentée par la Convention nationale à l'acceptation du peuple français et sur les décrets des 5 et 13 Fructidor, soumis à sa sanction.* Printed by order of the Convention.

assemblies had come in ; but these are the only results we know of.

The liberty of citizens was generally respected in the primary assemblies, and each voted, as authorised by the decree of the 5th of *Fructidor*, in the manner he preferred ; that is to say, by open or secret ballot. An example of this diversity appears in the *procès-verbal* of the section of the Amis-de-la-Patrie in Paris. I know of no case in which the majority forced the minority to vote aloud.

In the armies the Constitution was accepted by 69,567 votes against 1,449 ; in the navy, by 3,846 against 309.

The departments in which there were the largest number of votes against the Constitution were : the Ardennes (4,813 for, 1,294 against), Aube (8,042 for, 1,291 against), Cher (4,198 for, 1073 against), Doubs (14,138 for, 1,651 against), Eure (5,338 for, 1,479 against), Eure-et-Loir (2,706 for, 2,400 against), Indre (4,684 for, 1,045 against), Loiret (4,659 for, 1,621 against), Mont Blanc (11,167 for, 2,884 against), Orne (11,245 for, 1,363 against), Seine (68,266 for, 1,426 against), Seine-Inférieure (16,115 for, 948 against), Seine-et-Oise (10,120 for, 1,549 against), Yonne (8,444 for, 1,081 against). There was one department, but only one, which rejected the Constitution : that of Mont-Terrible (by 1,936 votes against 171). But this was an anti-French demonstration amidst a population only recently annexed. What, in the other departments, was the meaning of the negative votes? I do not think that we can suppose that a single Frenchman rejected the Constitution because it was not sufficiently democratic. It is almost certain that all the negative votes were those of counter-revolutionists ; such at all events was the contemporary opinion. In reality the plebiscite on the Constitution was a plebiscite on the Republic ; on the Revolution itself, which emerged from the trial triumphantly.

As for the plebiscite on the decrees : this was really a plebiscite on the question whether the nation was still willing to put its trust in the Convention ; and we cannot say that the Convention issued from the trial victoriously. The enormous number of abstentions show a general disapproval of the design of the members of the Convention to remain in power. Although these decrees were finally accepted by the majority of those who did vote, there is no doubt that public opinion condemned them. Nineteen departments actually rejected them : Aisne, Allier, Ardèche, Aube, Doubs, Eure, Eure-et-Loir, Haute-Loire, Loire, Lozère, Marne, Haute-Marne, Nièvre, Oise, Seine-et-Marne, Seine-et-Oise, Somme, and Vaucluse. In this latter department the supporters of the Convention did not dare to vote ; the vote against the decrees was unanimous, and was 1,474 strong. In Seine the decrees, according to the second official bulletins, were rejected by 21,734 votes to 1,156. We find, however, that many of the sections gave no figures, but simply made the announcement that the decrees were unanimously refused. The decrees were rejected by all the sections of the department of Seine, except that of the Quinze-Vingts (Faubourg Saint-Antoine), and by all the cantons except that of Pantin.

The results of the double plebiscite served to demonstrate that the south-east of France was still, in the year III, a stronghold of republicanism, as will be seen by the following list of the votes in the departments of Aude, Bouches-du-Rhône, Garde, Hérault, Pyrenées-Orientales, and Var :

| | Constitution. | | Decrees. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | For. | Against. | For. | Against. |
| Aude ... ... ... ... ... | 5,604 | 418 | 134 | 76 |
| Bouches-du-Rhône ... ... | 15,879 | 8 | 95 | 10 |
| Garde ... ... ... ... | 1,195 | 193 | 1,752 | 895 |
| Hérault ... ... ... ... | 9,807 | 10 | 941 | 0 |
| Pyrenées-Orientales ... ... | 1,089 | 52 | 124 | 49 |
| Var ... ... ... ... ... | 8,449 | 36 | 2,371 | 0 |

To sum up, we may say that France resigned herself unwillingly to the decrees which maintained two-thirds of the members of Convention and willingly accepted the new Constitution. Nevertheless, she seemed to accept it with less enthusiasm than the Constitution of 1793, since the latter had received about 750,000 more votes than did the former. Does this mean that France preferred a democratic constitution to one founded on the property-holders' suffrages? No; but in 1793 the country was in danger; more citizens took the trouble to go forth and consecrate the Republic by their votes; while in 1795 the country was no longer in danger, and fewer citizens felt bound to go to the poll.

## XII.

In conformity with the law, the electoral assemblies sat from the 20th to the 29th of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV for the purpose of appointing the deputies to the Legislature. To judge by the *procès-verbaux*, these operations were effected peaceably, without any irregularities, except in two departments: Doubs and Lot, where the advanced republicans, dissatisfied with the first results, seceded, and constituted a rival assembly in opposition to the original assembly, which appointed other deputies. The Legislature acknowledged only those elected by the original assemblies.

We have no data that will allow us to depict the struggle of the parties in these electoral assemblies. Men still affected to be of no party: pretended that they had entered into no agreements before the poll. This scruple was pushed to such a point that in the assembly of Puy-de-Dôme an elector was expelled for having distributed voting-papers; while in that of Marne an elector was denounced in the courts for having distributed printed lists. The preceding assemblies had not confined themselves to matters of election;

they had received or drawn up petitions ; speeches were delivered ; resolutions were passed of a distinctly political character. This time the assemblies merely voted, in conformity with Article 37 of the Constitution, which read as follows : "The electoral assemblies may not deal with any matter foreign to the elections with which they are entrusted ; they may neither send nor receive any address, petition, or deputation." The law of the 5th of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV threatened a punishment of two years in irons against all presidents and secretaries of assemblies, whether electoral or primary, who should allow these regulations to be broken. Consequently the electoral assemblies manifested their tendencies not in their *procès-verbaux*, but only in their votes.

The republicans loudly denounced the royalist character of these elections. They were not mistaken in suspecting the republicanism of those deputies of the Seine, for instance, who formed the new third : Laffon-Ladébat, Muraire, Gibert-Desmolières, Dambray (the future Keeper of the Seals to Louis XVIII), Portalis, and Le Couteulx-Canteleu. However, none of these deputies professed royalism at that period, and everything leads us to believe that the electors chose them as moderates and anti-Conventionalists.

The real significance of these elections lay in the fact that they constituted a general protest against the policy displayed by the Convention in its persistent survival; against the decree of the two-thirds ; against the influence which for some time since the Montagnards had regained. The elections of the year IV were anti-Jacobin, anti-anarchist, anti-terrorist.

It will be remembered that the electoral assemblies were by law obliged to return at least 483 members of Convention as members of the new Legislature; and that a subsequent regulation had established a system of supplementary lists, so that it would have

been extremely difficult for the electors to avoid this obligation. Yet they did contrive to avoid it; and only 379 members of the Convention were re-elected (124 by means of the supplementary lists).

Among the 379 the choice of the electors tended toward the more moderate members of the Convention. These moderates were the objects of multiple elections, and this multiplicity was less a sign of popularity than a matter of tactics, whose object was to avoid electing the number of members of Convention demanded by law. The deputies who were elected most often were Boissy d'Anglas, Lanjuinais, and Henry-Larivière; next to them came Defermon, Lesage (of Eure-et-Loir), Cambacérès, Durand-Maillane, Pelet (of Lozère), Dusaulx, and Saladin.

On the 4th of *Brumaire* of the year IV the Convention ceased its functions. On the same day (in conformity with a law of the 30th of *Vendémiaire* preceding), the re-elected members assembled in an "Electoral Assembly of France," and selected, among the members who had not been re-elected, "104 deputies, who, together with those of the colonies, were to complete the number of the Five Hundred." No member of Convention enjoying any degree of fame was omitted from the new Legislature: excepting Fréron, Paganel, Thomas Paine, Tréhouart, and those who were ineligible on account of proscription.[1]

On the morrow, the 5th of *Brumaire*, the Legislature assembled. After the roll-call lots were drawn to determine, among the deputies who were married, or widowers over forty years of age, the 250 who were to form the Council of Elders. Of these 250 the best known were Bréard, Cochon, Courtois, Roger-Ducos, Durand-Maillane, Goupilleau (of Fontenay), Goupil de Préfelne, Johannot, Kervélégan,

[1] See the *Procès-verbal de l'Assemblée électorale de France*, included in vol. i. of the *Procès-verbal du Conseil des Cinq-Cents*.

Lacombe Saint-Michel, Lanjuinais, La Revellière-Lépeaux, Portalis, Rovère, and Ysabeau. Then the two Councils separated. The Elders elected as their president La Revellière-Lépeaux; the Five Hundred, Daunou. On the 8th and 9th of *Brumaire* the Five Hundred prepared a list of fifty candidates for the formation of the executive Directory. In order to force their preference on the Elders, they inserted none but names which were little known, with the exception of five: namely, La Revellière-Lépeaux, Reubell, Siéyès, Le Tourneur (of la Manche), and Barras. These the Council of Elders immediately nominated Directors. Siéyès, having refused the honour, was replaced by Carnot.

The executive Directory entered upon its duties on the 12th of *Brumaire*, and formed the following Ministry: Justice, Merlin (of Douai); the Interior, Bénézech; Foreign Relations, Charles Delacroix; Marine and Colonies, Truguet; War, Aubert-Dubayet; Finance, Faipoult. General Lagarde was chosen secretary; he had formerly been secretary-general of the administration of the department of Nord, and discharged his functions until the 18th of *Brumaire*.[1]

In this manner the Constitution of the year III was set in motion.

[1] The Directory chose four State messengers: the ex-conventionals Dubrœucq, Chaumont, Roubaud, and Sallengros.

# CHAPTER VIII

## THE APPLICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE YEAR III

. General character of the period.—II. The electoral system : election of deputies.—III. The electoral system : election of functionaries. —IV. The Legislature : the Council of Five Hundred and the Council of Elders. — V. The Executive Directory and the Ministers.—VI. The commissaries of the Directory. Administrative centralisation.—VII. The Clubs.—VIII. The periodical Press.

### I.

THE period of the application of the Constitution of the year III, or the period which is often called the *Directoire*, and which we are speaking of as the *bourgeois* Republic, because it involved the rule of a politically privileged class of citizens, was an attempt at normal government in circumstances which were still abnormal, but less so than during the year II. During these four years France was at war with England, and, with only one respite, with Austria. Finally Russia also turned against France. From *Ventôse* to *Thermidor* of the year VII, France was defeated and threatened with invasion. The civil war lingered on, intermittently, here and there; the Republic was still defending itself against the royalists allied with the priests who were exciting insurrections in Poitou, in Brittany, and at one moment, in the year VII, in the whole Toulousaine country. During

the whole period the Republic was hampered in its development by the financial difficulties which inevitably resulted from the war, and by the intrigues of royalists in disguise and the Papist clergy.[1] But these dangers, except in the year VII, were by no means vital, and in the year VII they seemed so for a few weeks only. Then there was a spontaneous return to some of the forms and laws of the Terror; but this return was only ephemeral, and the victories of Brune and of Masséna almost immediately saved the country. During the rest of the time France was, so to speak, in a semi-revolutionary state; under a demi-Terror. The Constitution was applied strictly, and at the same time laws were made which suspended certain of its principles for a season: for example, the special measures directed against emigrants, priests, and journalists. But the general tendency was towards a normal existence. Although circumstances led to two or three *coups d'état*, the spirit of obedience to the law soon became general. These *coups d'état*, too, were effected not by the people pouring into the streets, but by the Legislature, in the form of laws; without conflict with the citizens, and almost without disturbance. All the revolutionary measures of this period took the shape of laws. There came about a kind of regularisation of political and administrative life; a tendency to "put social order in the place of the chaos inseparable from revolution."[2] The rule of the bureaucrat was beginning. Administrative centralisation was finally becoming established. The moral and material unification of France was nearing accomplishment; accompanied by an attempt (only half success-

[1] It will be remembered that this term does not, in this connection, mean simply the Catholic clergy.—TRANS.

[2] These phrases are cited from the proclamation of the Directory to the French People, informing them of the installation of the new Government, dated the 14th of *Brumaire* of the year IV.

ful) to absorb into the Gallic unity the peoples of Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine.

Of the facts and the laws relating to the application of the Constitution of the year III, let us particularly consider those which relate to the more essential elements of that Constitution, beginning with the elections.

## II.

How did the electoral system work?

We have seen that universal suffrage was replaced by a property-owners' suffrage ; and this is our justification for saying that the democratic Republic was replaced by a *bourgeois* Republic.

As before, the deputies were elected by indirect suffrage in two stages ; the first stage was that of the primary assembly (one per canton or per section of a canton) ; the second stage was the electoral assembly (one per department).[1]

The law was in favour of complete liberty in voting ; in all cases and everywhere it forbade voting aloud. Article 31 of the Constitution enacted that all elections should be by secret ballot.[2] Article 37 preserved the electoral assemblies from outside influences by forbidding them to receive any address, petition, or deputation.

There were elections once a year. Each year, on the 1st of *Germinal*, the primary assemblies met in order to elect the members of the electoral assemblies, with a view to the annual renewal of the third

[1] There were also "communal assemblies," but these, as we shall see, took part in municipal elections only.

[2] See also the law of the 25th of *Fructidor* of the year III, § 1, Article 10 : "In every election each voter is called by name by the secretary or one of the scrutators, and he gives in, in the sight of all, a paper closed but not signed."

leaving the Legislature, and also, as we shall presently see, in order to name various functionaries as occasion arose. The electoral assemblies [1] assembled on the 20th of *Germinal* and were expected to have completed their operations in a single session of ten days at most, and without adjournment; after which they were dissolved, and their members could only be re-elected after an interval of two years.[2]

The law provided no means of preventing abstentions, which were at that time so numerous. On the contrary: the instructions of the 5th of *Ventôse* of the year V, chapter ii., section 6, Article 3, direct that "no one shall give in his paper except in his turn and when he is called." If he missed his turn he could not vote.

Here are the other rules which the law of the 25th of *Fructidor* of the year III rendered common to all elections of all kinds.

Contrary to the previous custom, citizens were invited to enter their names as candidates, or to enter the names of others. "This candid manner of inviting the confidence of others," says the Instruction of the 5th of *Ventôse*, "is that most worthy of a republican; and in every respect it is preferable to the secret canvassing and obscure manœuvres of intriguing ambition." Formed in *Nivôse*, these lists were published in *Pluviôse* by the municipal and departmental administrations. But this system did not yield the results expected from it. Tried experimentally in the elections of the year V, the lists of candidates were abolished by the law of the 24th of *Pluviôse* of the year VI. Men were loth to put themselves forward as

[1] Each member of an electoral assembly received a payment of 75 centimes per league and 3 francs per day (law of 23rd of *Ventôse*, year V).

[2] The law of the 18th of *Ventôse* of the year VII applies this rule even to those secessional assemblies whose operations were invalidated.

candidates, and were still ashamed to proclaim attachment to a party. We find no traces of electoral committees nor of preliminary understandings between electors of like opinions.

A list was used in balloting if several citizens were to be elected at the same time (and this was always the case in the election of deputies). A citizen was elected if, at the first scrutiny, he had an "absolute majority" of votes.

If recourse was had to the ballot, the electors could vote only for those candidates whom the first scrutiny showed to have obtained the most votes.

"Article 9: If a sufficient number of candidates have not obtained an absolute majority, a list is formed of those who have obtained the highest relative plurality of votes. This list must not exceed in length ten times the number of the functionaries to be elected at the same scrutiny. Article 10: A second scrutiny then takes place, in which only those candidates can be voted for whose names are on the list mentioned in the preceding Article."

This final scrutiny was complicated by a *scrutiny of reduction*, as determined by Articles 11, 12, and 13 of the third department of the same law:

"For the final scrutiny, each voter places simultaneously, in two different vases, two papers; one of nomination, the other of reduction. On the first he writes as many names as there are functionaries to elect; on the other he writes the names of the citizens he wishes to withdraw from the list of competing candidates. This paper need not contain any name; but it may contain an unspecified number, but one always less than half the number of the names on the list mentioned in Article 9."

The "reductive papers" were counted first; and those candidates who were mentioned on these papers by the absolute majority of the voters could not be elected, whatever the number of votes in their favour deposited in the nomination vase. The other set of papers was now examined, and the successful candidates were those who, not being disqualified by the "re-

duction" process, received relatively the greatest number of positive votes.

Imperfectly understood, and imperfectly applied in the elections of the year IV, this "reduction scrutiny" was abolished by the law of the 28th of *Pluviôse* of the year IV, as well as the "scrutiny of the list." The elections of the year VI and those of the year VII were effected according to the law of December 22, 1789, Article 25, which reads :

"The representatives in the National Assembly will be elected by individual ballot and plurality of votes. If the first count taken for each candidate does not determine the election by absolute plurality, a second ballot will be taken. If this second ballot still fails to give an absolute plurality a third will be taken between those two candidates only who shall be recognised by the counters, and announced to the assembly, as having obtained the largest number of votes. If, finally, at this third ballot the votes are equally shared, the oldest candidates will be preferred."

The verification of the powers of the deputies was effected by law ; that is, the Council of Five Hundred appointed as many special commissions as there were electoral assemblies whose operations were to be examined. Upon the reports of these commissions it ratified or cancelled the elections to the Legislature (for the Council of Elders as well as the Council of Five Hundred) by means of "resolutions," which the Council of Elders approved or rejected.

Such were the rules in force at the elections of the year V ; those in force at the elections of the years VI and VII ; and others which affected all of these elections.

The intention of these laws was to ensure the liberty and sincerity of the elections. Designed, however, for normal conditions, they were in practice corrected by other laws, inspired by the abnormal conditions of civil and foreign war ; by the necessity of opposing empirically the resisting forces of the past : clericalism

and royalism. These laws, which their victims called Terrorist, and which clearly denote the persistence of the revolutionary system in the constitutional government, were designed to prevent the opposition from triumphing at the elections.

The law of the 30th of *Ventôse* of the year V demanded that before commencing their operations the members of the electoral assemblies were to make the following declaration: "I promise my support and fidelity to the Republic and to the Constitution of the year III. I undertake to defend them with all my might against the attacks of royalty and anarchy." The Directory demanded that instead of making this declaration the electors should take an oath, as did all public officials. The Council of Five Hundred thought the promise sufficient to keep royalists out of the assemblies; but it excluded only the open royalist; to the concealed royalist it was no obstacle. For this reason the law of the 19th of *Fructidor* imposed an oath of "hatred of royalty and anarchy, of fidelity and attachment to the Republic and the Constitution of the year III." Before, as after, the 18th of *Fructidor*, there was one shade of opinion that was not openly represented in the electoral assemblies: namely, royalist opinion.

Another law hampered more seriously the freedom of the elections: that of the 3rd of *Brumaire* of the year IV, which created classes of ineligibles; of which the first four articles are here cited in full:

"(1) Persons who either in the primary assemblies or in the electoral assemblies shall have provoked or signed measures contrary to the law or seditious, will be disabled, until the general peace, from exercising any legislative, administrative, municipal, or judicial functions, or from sitting on the grand jury in the High Courts of the nation, or the juries of any other tribunal. (2) Any person who has been included in a list of emigrants and has not obtained his final expunction; fathers, sons and grandsons, brothers and brothers-in-law, relations of the same degree, such as the uncles or nephews of persons included in the list of emigrants and not finally expunged, are

excluded, until the general peace, from all legislative, administrative, municipal, and judicial functions, and from serving on the grand jury, &c., &c. (3) Whosoever being in the circumstances above-mentioned shall accept or shall have accepted any public duty of this nature and shall fail to resign within twenty-four hours from the publication of this law, shall be punished by perpetual banishment, and any orders or actions he may have issued or performed since the publication of the law will be declared null and void. (4) Those citizens are excepted from the conditions of Articles 2 and 3 who have been members of one of the three National Assemblies; those who, during the period of the Revolution, have uninterruptedly fulfilled public functions by the choice of the people, and those who shall obtain the definite and final removal of their parents, relations, or themselves, from the aforesaid list."

Other articles authorised "all those who are not willing to live under the laws of the Republic and conform to them" to leave French territory, but on the condition of not returning, under the penalty of being dealt with as *émigrés*.

Repealed on the 9th of *Messidor* of the year V, this law was re-established by Articles 7-11 of the law of the 19th of *Fructidor* following.

*Émigrés* were not merely ineligible; the law of the 1st of *Fructidor* of the year III deprived them of civic rights in the following terms: "No person included in the list of the emigrants of the department in which is his domicile may enjoy the rights of a citizen, until his definitive removal from that list shall have been pronounced."[2] We have already seen that these lists were drawn up during the Terror in such a way that many persons were entered in them who in reality had never left France. After the 9th of *Thermidor* these lists were still compiled with the same precipitation, and the same dangers of error and untruth. The law of the 25th of *Brumaire* of the year III instructed the municipalities to draw up a statement of absent citizens every three months, and to submit it to the district administration, which by means of this statement

would prepare the list of *émigrés*. Under the Directory the central assembly of the department took the place of the district in this respect. By means of the departmental lists a general list of *émigrés* was formed every month. Once inscribed, it was very difficult to get a name removed. To do so it was necessary to prove residence in France since May 9, 1792. This proof once afforded, the final removal (entrusted to the Directory by the laws of the 28th and 30th of *Pluviôse* of the year IV) was delayed by all manner of formalities and administrative delays.

On the 5th of *Ventôse* of the year V the Council of Five Hundred, having demanded information as to the treatment which requests for erasure from the lists of emigrants met with, received from the Directory a message in which we read: "The number of emigrants inscribed on the general list is considerable; the rough estimate made in the office of the Minister of Finance gives the figures as over 120,000; and there are still some departments which have not sent in their lists."[2] The Directory owned that there were "errors and double entries" in this list. In any case, 17,000 demands for erasure had been made. Of these 17,000 demands a "decision had been solicited"[2] in only 4,500 cases. The Directory had pronounced on 1,500, and had only supported 170 claims. There were still some 3,000 to be considered.

We may perceive from these facts what a number of non-emigrant persons had been deprived of their electoral rights, because hatred or sheer stupidity had denounced them as emigrants. However, it does not seem that the entry to the primary assemblies had been uniformly refused at the beginning of the period of the Directory; for on the 7th of *Ventôse* of the year V the Directory resolved, on account of a report of Merlin (of Douai), that citizens inscribed on the list of *émigrés* should be excluded from the primary assemblies. It

must therefore be admitted that the law of the 1st of *Fructidor* of the year III had not until then been applied; and a further proof of this is the fact that the resolution of the Directory caused a feeling of indignation. The Council of Five Hundred appointed a Commission to consider the resolution; the Commission proposed measures which would tend indirectly to annul it. This disagreement between the Government and the Five Hundred was settled by a compromise. On the 21st of *Ventôse* the Five Hundred voted a resolution (approved on the 22nd by the Elders) which gave the right of voting to such citizens as, being inscribed on the list of *émigrés*, had obtained a *provisional* erasure of their names from their departmental administration.

However, this law of the 22nd of *Ventôse* was quickly repealed. The revolutionary law of the 19th of *Fructidor* of the year V banished from France, under the penalty of being sent before a military commission, all citizens inscribed on the general list who had not obtained their expunction.

In this manner the more notorious of the counter-revolutionaries were before the 18th of *Fructidor* excluded from the primary assemblies, and after that date were exiled.

Another class of citizens—the ex-nobles—were also, after the same date, provisionally deprived of electoral rights, by Article 1 of the law of the 9th of *Frimaire* of the year VI, thus conceived:

"The former nobles and those ennobled during life—that is, all those who received nobility from their fathers or who were ennobled during life and could transmit it by inheritance to their children, will not be able to exercise the rights of French citizens in the primary assemblies whether communal or electoral, nor be appointed to any public office, until they have fulfilled the conditions and wait the time prescribed for foreigners by Article 10 of the Constitution."

Thus the nobles were reckoned as foreigners and had

to become naturalised Frenchmen ; which means that among other conditions they had to prove a residence of seven consecutive years in France. Ex-members of the National Assemblies were excepted from these conditions (excepting those who had protested, in the Constituent Assembly against the abolition of the nobility), and also the members of the executive Directory (one of them, Barras, was noble), the ministers of the Republic, soldiers on active service,

"and similarly all those who shall prove to have contributed to the conquest of liberty and the foundation of the Republic, to have defended it by their courage, to have served it in civil or military capacities (not counting service in the National Guard as military service), provided that they have always remained faithful to the Republican cause."

It will be remarked that this law did not merely exclude from the ballot the majority of the ex-nobles ; it indirectly permitted the Government to reserve the civic rights at will for such ex-nobles as were favourable to it. Was it ever applied? It announced that the form " in which proof must be afforded " would be determined by another law, which was never passed. It is probable that the ex-nobles were arbitrarily deprived of or given the right to vote, according to the occasion and the circumstances or caprice of the Government ; or that many of them abstained out of prudence.

Such were the laws which under the Directory restrained electoral liberty, and the exercise of the national sovereignty, if we may use the word " nation " to denote the privileged middle class. As for governmental pressure, as we should say, it did not betray itself in the putting forward of official candidates. One can scarcely say that there were official candidates ; except in the Belgian departments, which were being Gallicised at all costs. Thus on the approach of the elections of the year V the police minister Cochon wrote to the com-

missary attached to the department of Dyle that it would be interesting to have Frenchmen nominated; and he sent a list of names, intending secrecy to be preserved, which was published by the journals, and created a scandal. If we are to credit the memoirs of Thibaudeau, the Directory, about the same period, demanded of the Treasury a sum of 750,000 francs, "in order to ensure tranquillity during the elections."[1] Publicly the Government affected a profound reserve; from which it emerged only upon the eve of the elections of the year VI, in a proclamation (dated the 9th of *Germinal*) which was placarded all over France. In this, turning upon the republican democrats, it announced in threatening tones that the Legislature would not allow these "brigands" to sit; and we shall presently see that these threats were realised, on the 22nd of *Floréal*. During the elections of the year VII the Government resumed its reserve. Only a single act of coercion was complained of; a circular addressed, on the 22nd of *Ventôse*, by the commissary of the Directory attached to the central administration of Sarthe, to his colleagues in the cantons. He invited them to convoke, before the meeting of the primary assemblies, an extraordinary session of the municipal agents and adjutants, and to "ask the principal owners and farmers of land of each commune, from him, to accompany them to the assembly." When the primary assembly should have appointed its electors, the commissary to the canton would assemble the latter, before their departure for Mans, and would give them "the necessary instructions to direct them"; telling them that the Legislature and the Directory were resolved to bring about a new 18th of *Fructidor*, or a new 22nd of *Floréal*, if the elections were of the same character as those of the years V and VI. On the 2nd of *Germinal* the Council of Five Hundred called upon

[1] *Mémoires*, vol. ii. pp. 51, 52.

the Directory for explanations ; and the Directory replied, on the 9th, that it had censured the commissary for his imperative tone, but that it had not recalled him ; his circular being, on the whole, merely a commentary on the preamble of the law of the 19th of *Fructidor* of the year V and the 22nd of *Floréal* of the year VI.[1]

It was not by means of official or officious candidatures or by Government coercion that the electoral system was corrupted, but by two *coups d'état*, which invalidated or modified the elections of the years V and VI.

It will be remembered that the two Councils, renewable each year by a third part, were composed, as regarded the two-thirds, of ex-members of Convention whose re-election had been compulsory ; while the remaining third consisted of new members. One-third of the "Conventionals" was renewable in *Germinal* of the year V ; another third in *Germinal* of the year VI ; the remaining third of the Council—the new members—in *Germinal* of the year VII. In the beginning, two-thirds of the Five Hundred consisted of 333 Conventionals. Death and resignations had reduced this number to 312. When from these there had been subtracted, by lot, the 167 who formed the third renewable in the year VI, there remained 145 to be replaced in the year V. In the Council of Elders there had been in the beginning 167 Conventionals ; they were reduced to 154, of whom 83 were renewable in the year VI and 74 in the year V.

The elections of the first third, which resigned in *Germinal* of the year V, were, or rather appeared to be, royalist in tendency. (We shall return to this subject later.)

However, the Legislature regarded them as normal, and between the 1st of *Prairial* and the 14th of

[1] *Moniteur*, 4th, 5th, and 8th of *Germinal*, year VII.

*Messidor* of the year V they were ratified, excepting that of the ex-Conventional Barère (of Hautes-Pyrenées), which was declared void. The only elections still to be ratified were those of Gers.

By the *coup d'état* of the 18th of *Fructidor* the Legislature, under compulsion, partially went back on this decision; and by the law of the 19th annulled the elections of 49 departments: those of Ain, Ardèche, Ariège, Aube, Avignon, Bouches-du-Rhône, Calvados, Charente, Cher, Côte-d'Or, Côtes-du-Nord, Dordogne, Eure, Eure-et-Loir, Gironde, Hérault, Ille-et-Vilaine, Indre-et-Loire, Loire, Haute Loire, Loire-Inférieure, Loiret, Manche, Maine, Mayenne, Mont-Blanc, Morbihan, Moselle, Deux-Nèthes, Nord, Oise, Orne, Pas-de-Calais, Puy-de-Dôme, Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin, Rhône, Saône-et-Loire, Sarthe, Haute-Saône, Seine, Seine-Inférieure, Seine-et-Marne, Seine-et-Oise, Somme, Tarn, Var, Vaucluse, and Yonne.[1] Now these departments, according to the law of the 27th of *Pluviôse* of the year V, should have elected 136 deputies. Moreover, among the deputies, to the number of 53, whom the same law condemned to deportation, there were 41 who had not been elected by any of the above departments. Thus 177 deputies were excluded in *Fructidor;* and as the Constitution did not allow of partial elections between the annual elections, the Legislature remained deprived of about one-quarter of its members, during more than seven months; that is to say, until the elections of *Germinal* of the year VI (without speaking of the deputies who in the interval died or resigned).

In the year VI (by the law of the 17th of *Ventôse*) 420 deputies were to be elected.

These elections were or appeared to be demagogic, anarchistic, Terrorist, Jacobin. The irregularities which had been committed during these elections—that is to

[1] The same law also ratified the election of Gers.

say, the instances of secession—served as an excuse for annulling or modifying them.

We have seen that in the elections of the year IV. there were two secessions.[1] In the elections of the year V there were three: those of Lot, Landes, and Deux-Nèthes.[2] In the year XI there were defections in 26 departments, without speaking of previous defections in the primary assemblies.

In order to comprehend what these defections were, let us take as an example that of the department of Seine, as revealed by the *procès-verbaux* of the original assembly and the dissenting assembly.

The original assembly met at the Oratory on the 20th of *Germinal* of the year VI. It was immediately apparent, as soon as its officers were elected, that the assembly was divided into two parties. The president, Génissieu, and the secretary, Cambacérès, were elected only by a small majority; the former by 371 votes against 235, and the latter by 325 against 284. The *procès-verbal* does not give the names of the candidates whom the minority supported[3]; but the ensuing events proved that this minority consisted of moderates, while the majority was of a pronounced republican character; or, as men then called it, Jacobin. These differences of opinion appeared during the verification of powers, which was long and complicated, especially with regard to the question as to which electors ought to be eliminated according to the terms of the law of the 3rd

[1] See preceding Chapter, § X.

[2] Before the 18th of *Fructidor* the Legislature had pronounced on each of these three defections, admitting one of the two deputations elected and rejecting the other. Of these three decisions only that relating to the Landes was maintained by the law of the 19th of *Fructidor*. The elections of Deux-Nèthes were annulled; but the deputies from Lot, at first excluded, were admitted.

[3] But it gives us one curious fact. Among these electors of the second degree (an *élite* of insignificant numbers) were some who, not knowing how to write, had to dictate their ballot-papers.

of *Brumaire* of the year IV and the 19th of *Fructidor* of the year V. The republican majority excluded such of the royalist electors as were compromised; for instance, a certain Lamaignère, who had been president of a section on the 13th of *Vendémiaire*. There had been secessions in the primary assemblies; for example, in assembly No. 5, of which the two fragments had sat simultaneously at Saint-Sulpice; one in the choir, the other in the chapel. The electoral assembly ratified the proceedings of the latter portion, because the former had admitted citizens whom the law deprived of the right to vote; that is, had admitted royalists. Two-thirds of the session were devoted to the labours of verification.

Then, on the 26th of *Germinal*, seeing that the assembly was about to elect advanced republicans, the moderate minority seceded, and proceeded to sit in the Louvre, in the hall of the Institute. Its *procès-verbal* commences with an "act of secession." It states that a "spirit of faction" possessed the assembly sitting at the Oratory, which led to arbitrary and tyrannical actions in the verification of powers; that men were admitted and excluded for the same reasons; that anarchy and royalism shook hands with one another. The seceders declare that the hall in which they sat was procured for them by the efforts of a commissary of the Directory to the central administration of Seine; by which we see that the Government facilitated secession.

The seceding assembly was at first very weak in numbers; it elected its president, Guyot-Desherbiers, by 34 votes out of 57; and its secretary Huguet by 45 out of 53. But it made recruits, and the number of voters gradually rose to 212. This assembly elected as deputies (on the 28th and 29th of *Germinal*): To the Council of Elders, Lenoir-Laroche, Rousseau, Farcot, Rivaud, Huguet, Ducis, Gorneau (Farcot and Ducis

refused election and were replaced by Albert and Arnould) ; to the Council of Five Hundred, Guyot-Desherbiers, Berlier, Cabanis, Champagne, Portiez (of Oise), Marie-Joseph Chénier, Andrieux, Pollart, Chazal, and Aubert.

However, the original assembly persisted in its proceedings, passed over a communication from the secessional assembly, appointed Cambacérès president in place of Génissieu, and, consisting still of more than 400 voters, elected as deputies to the Council of Elders : Gaultier de Biauzat, Monge, Gohier, Leblanc, Roger Ducos, Sijas, Dupuch ; and to the Council of Five Hundred : Cambacérès, Robert Lindet, Oudard, General Moulin, P. F. Tissot, Castel, Berlier, and Lamarque (who refused election and was replaced by Gomigeon). There were still two deputies to the Five Hundred to be appointed ; but the ten days allowed by law for the electoral proceedings had elapsed, and the Oratory assembly had to dissolve without completing the election of its deputies.

This allowed the Council of Five Hundred (on the 17th of *Floréal*, year VI) to declare valid the proceedings of the seceding assembly of the Institute, and the law of the 22nd of *Floréal* confirmed this resolution.

These secessions, then, were effected in the year VI, by the moderates, whenever they saw that the majority of the electors would appoint extreme republicans ; and these secessions also afforded the republicans in power in the Legislature the pretext and the matter for the *coup d'état* by which they repaired the ill success of their friends at the elections. This *coup d'état* consisted in the passing of the famous law of the 22nd of *Floréal* of the year VI, by which the powers of those elected were verified as a whole, and of which the principal results were as follows.[1]

[1] This law was published neither in the *Moniteur* nor in the Duvergier collection ; nor in any of the collections under the direction

In 7 departments the elections were completely annulled ; in Allier, Loire, and the Landes, where there were secessions ; and in Loir-et-Cher, Haute-Saône, Dordogne, and Basses-Pyrénées ; where there was no secession, but the deputies elected were not to the liking of the Legislature. Sixteen deputies were in this way excluded.

In 23 departments a choice was made between the two seceding bodies ; that is, the deputies elected by one of the fragments of the electoral assembly were admitted, the only determining factor being the sympathy inspired in the authors of the law by the opinions or persons of the electors.

In other departments objectionable deputies were excluded individually ; the two brothers Lindet, for example, in the department of Eure ; 48 deputies were thus excluded.[1]

In this way the elections of the year VI were changed in a revolutionary manner.

In *Germinal* of the year VII there were (according to the law of the previous 28th of *Ventôse*) 309 deputies to be elected :[2] to the Council of Elders, 81 for three years, 13 for two years, and 9 for a year ; to the Council of Five Hundred, 163 for three years, 26 for two years, and 17 for a year. Again there were secessions in 26 departments. But this time the Legislature kept within the law, and ratified the operations of the original assemblies.[3]

of those who framed it, doubtless on account of the great length of the text. I have reprinted it from the *Bulletin des lois*, No. 200, in the review *La Révolution française*, vol. xxxviii. pp. 428–60, with notes derived from the minutes of the electoral assemblies.

[1] I shall return to this law when dealing with opinions and parties.

[2] Plus 6 for the colonies.

[3] Those who cannot consult the MS. *procès-verbaux* of the elections of deputies under the Directory may with advantage read the collection of documents entitled *Assemblées électorales de la Charente-Inférieure* (1790–99), by M. Eschassériaux, deputy, Niort, Clouzot, 1868. This is

Towards the end of the Directory the elections were conducted legally. But the habit had been formed of ignoring the will of the electors whenever it was considered worth while to do so. The authors of the *coup d'état* of the 18th of *Brumaire* and of the Constitution of the year VII were conveniently inspired by this habit.

III.

Not only deputies had to be elected. Judges, and departmental and municipal administrators were also elective. Their election was conditioned by the same laws as those regulating the election of deputies, and was subjected to the same rules, whether normal and constitutional or abnormal and unconstitutional.

Three kinds of assemblies appointed the functionaries of France. Firstly, in communes of less than 5,000 inhabitants, there were "communal assemblies" which appointed the agents of each commune and their adjutants. Secondly, in the cantons the same primary assemblies that appointed the electors also appointed the justice of the peace and his assessors, the president of the municipal administration of the canton, or the municipal officers in communes of more than 5,000 inhabitants. Thirdly, in each department the same electoral assembly that elected the deputies elected also the members of the Court of Cassation, the grand juries, the departmental administrators, the president, public accuser, and registrar of the Criminal Court, and the judges of the civil court (the four judges of the Criminal Court were selected from the civil Court). Was this liberal decentralisation, which made so many functions elective, compatible with the state of war in which France existed during the whole period of the

a textual reproduction of all the *procès-verbaux* of one single department, it is true, but a department in which all was normal; there were no secessions, no disturbances.

*bourgeois* Republic, and the condition of civil war in which she existed intermittently? The leading politicians of the time did not think so ; and having proclaimed the elective principle, already proclaimed in the preceding Constitutions, they restrained it in operation by a number of laws and measures of exception.

The constitution itself (Article 196) gave the Directory the right of suspending or dismissing, as it thought necessary, both departmental and cantonal administrators. When the five members of a departmental administration were dismissed, the Directory (Article 198) provided for their replacement until the following election, on condition of " choosing only from the former administrators of the same department." On the other hand, the law of the 3rd of *Brumaire*, which excluded *émigrés*, and those counted as *émigrés*, together with their relatives, from the performance of public functions, instructed the Directory to replace the functionaries excluded for that reason.

At the commencement of the new *régime*, an unforeseen complication gave rise to other restrictions of the elective principle. On the 29th of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV the electoral assembly of the department of Seine had to break up, in conformity with the law, without having had time to proceed with the judicial and administrative elections. In two messages (of the 13th and 21st of *Brumaire*) the Directory requested the Legislature to remedy this state of affairs. A debate on the subject was opened in the Council of Five Hundred on the 22nd of *Brumaire*. Gibert-Desmolières, Villers, and Pastoret demanded that such assemblies as had not completed their elections should be convoked anew ; Dumolard and Villetard, that until the elections of the year IV the Directory itself should appoint the functionaries not yet elected. The last counsel prevailed, and the following resolution was voted : " The executive Directory is charged with the

duty of appointing provisionally, and until the next elections, the administrators and judges in those departments whose electoral assemblies have not proceeded to these appointments within the time limit fixed by Article 36 of the constitutional act." The Elders spent eight days in discussing the resolution; the debate was extremely lively. Du Pont (of Nemours) opposed it vehemently, saying now that people wanted to return to "Robespierre's ways"; now that it would be to "re-establish monarchy" to permit "that the same power that appoints generals should also appoint judges." Among the supporters of the resolution, Vernier approved of it "because the welfare of the people is the supreme law"; Porcher, because the "murderers of September" had a "lamentable influence on the electoral bodies." Despite the opposition of Portalis, Lanjuinais, and Tronchet, the Elders adopted the resolution on the 25th of *Brumaire*.

Very shortly other laws yet further diminished the rights of the electors. On the 22nd, 24th, and 25th of *Frimaire* of the year IV the Directory was authorised to fill, until the following elections: Firstly, in the Civil Courts, all places vacant through resignation or other causes. Secondly, all vacancies in the ranks of the Justices of the Peace. Thirdly, all vacant places in the municipal administrations which the primary assemblies had been unable to fill.

Cities whose population exceeded a hundred thousand —Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux—had been divided into several municipalities. The law of the 19th of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV had prescribed the convocation, within three months, of the primary assemblies, with a view to electing these municipalities. The Directory viewed the approach of these elections with uneasiness; in a message to the Legislature it expressed a fear that these elections might disturb the public peace; and on the 3rd of *Pluviôse*, a report was read

by Marie-Joseph Chénier, in which he "considered that the royalists, vanquished on the 13th of *Vendémiare* last, still nourished the guilty hope of overthrowing liberty; that the factions, confounded by the courageous National Convention, were seeking to recover from their fall, and to perpetuate a disastrous system of crime and anarchy throughout the Republic; that at the present time the holding of primary cantonal assemblies in the communes of Bordeaux, Lyons, Marseilles, and Paris would furnish a new source of intestine discord." As a result, the Council of Five Hundred passed the following resolution, which the Elders approved on the subsequent day:

"The time limit determined by Article 38 of the law of the 19th of *Vendémiaire* last, with regard to the holding of the cantonal primary assemblies and the election of the municipalities in the communes of Bordeaux, Lyons, Marseilles, and Paris is postponed until the 1st of *Thermidor* next. The executive Directory will provisionally appoint the members who will until that date compose the municipal administrations of these four communes."

On the 1st of *Thermidor* of the year IV the municipal elections were held, and the new municipalities entered upon their duties in the above-named cities, with the exception of Marseilles. There there were riots; the ballot-urns were broken; a citizen was killed, and 2,800 were excluded as royalists, if we are to credit Thibaudeau's report of the 16th of *Thermidor*. A law of the 21st of *Thermidor* annulled these elections and instructed the Directory to fill the places of the municipal administrators, the justice of the peace, and his assessors, in the commune of Marseilles, until the elections of the year V.

We have seen that the Constitution authorised the Directory to provide for the replacement of the members of a departmental administration, should they all be dismissed. The law of the 22nd of *Ventôse* of the year V gave it the same right in case all should resign.

A law of the same date instructed it "to appoint provisionally until the elections of the year V, to perform their duties until that time, the members of municipal administrations of communes having more than five thousand inhabitants, should all the members of these administrations be dismissed or should they resign." When all the administrative posts were not vacant in the same administration, whether departmental or municipal, it was to the remaining members (and not to the Directory) that the power was given, by the Constitution itself (Article 188) to fill the vacant places until the elections.

The Directory would willingly enough have assumed the right of effecting *individual* appointments and dismissals of members of the administrations. Such was the object of this message of the 3rd of *Prairial* of the year IV. The Legislature was in no haste to reply, and its reply was in the negative : the law of the 30th of *Messidor* of the year V confirmed the preceding laws, and enacted that the Directory had no power to appoint provisional administrators, whether in canton or department, "except in cases where an administration had lost all the members composing it."

It was therefore necessary, did the Government wish to evade the opposition of individual administrators, to discharge and renew an administration as a whole. This it did ; notably on the eve of the *coup d'état* of the 18th of *Fructidor*. Between the 3rd and the 17th of *Fructidor* it dismissed the departmental administrations of Nièvre, Indre-et-Loire, Tarn, Allier, Yonne, Seine-et-Oise, and the municipal administrations of Tours and Versailles. On the 18th of *Fructidor* it renewed the administrations of the Department of Seine and the municipalities of Paris.

The revolutionary law of the 19th of *Fructidor* of the year V not only annulled the elections of the deputies in 49 departments ; it also annulled all the

other operations of the primary and electoral assemblies ; all the appointments to the post of administrator or judge in the same departments. The preceding laws had directed the executive to fill the posts thus suppressed. By the laws of the 19th of *Fructidor* of the year V and the 12th of *Prairial* of the year VI it was also instructed to fill provisionally the posts of judge and justice of the peace. The law of the 13th of *Vendémiaire* of the year VI abrogated that of the 30th of *Messidor*, and permitted the Directory to appoint or dismiss individual administrators.[1] Finally (by Articles 27 and 28 of the law of the 19th of *Fructidor* of the year V), the members of the Court of Cassation elected in 1791 had to terminate their functions, and the Directory was instructed to replace them.[2]

From the morrow of the *coup d'état* until the beginning of *Frimaire* of the year VI the register of the Directory is full of dismissals, collective or individual, of departmental or municipal administrators.

The elections of the years VI and VII put an end only provisional to this system of the appointment of functionaries by the Directory. The results of these elections were treated with hardly more respect than those of the elections of the year V. The proof of this statement may be found in the register of the Directory and the minutes of its executive resolutions.

What, at a given moment of the history of the *bourgeois* Republic, were the respective numbers of elected and of non-elected functionaries filling places

[1] The Directory did not wait for permission before proceeding to make individual appointments. On the 28th of *Fructidor*, for instance, it appointed Fournier and Lefèbvre members of the central administration of Seine.

[2] In *Germinal*, year V, there was a rather serious quarrel between the Directory and the Court of Cassation, *à propos* of an appeal that the royalists, tried before a Council of War, had wished to bring before the Court. See the *Moniteur*, 11th, 15th and 16th of *Germinal*, year V.

which the Constitution had rendered elective? This is an inquiry which has not been prosecuted, which I have not had the leisure to undertake, but the figures could be obtained from the Directory documents in the National Archives. It would be very interesting to possess these statistics. What has been said above, however, suffices to show that in a large number of cases the application of the elective principle was suspended or violated in such a way as to nullify the citizens' privilege of appointing officials. The theory of decentralisation established by the Constitution was usurped by a centralisation which, later on, afforded Bonaparte an established background, and habits already of respectable age. When the Constitution of the year VIII suppressed the election of administrators men were neither surprised nor afflicted by the loss of a right which had almost fallen into desuetude, and it did not seem that any radical change had been effected.

## IV.

We have seen that the Legislature was divided into two Councils: the Five Hundred, sitting in the Tuileries, in the old Hall of the Convention, and the Elders, who at first sat in the Salle de Manège, and after the 2nd of *Pluviôse* of the year VII in the Palais Bourbon.

Their internal economy was regulated by Articles 44-109 of the Constitution, which we have already analysed.[1] The Convention completed these regulations by a law of the 28th of *Fructidor* of the year III, which provided minute precautions against factions and cabals. In order to prevent the deputies from conspiring together and forming cliques, groups, and parties, this law ordained that in each of the halls the

[1] See previous Chapter, § V.

deputies' seats should be "separated one from another." Further, in order that deputies should not always have the same neighbours, no deputy was allowed to keep the same seat longer than a month. The seats were numbered, and lots were drawn each month. No deputy, "in any case or under any pretext might during the month occupy another seat than that which fell to him." It was thus hoped to avoid a Mountain, a Gironde, a Right, or a Left. The means taken were partly successful. After reading the debates of the two Councils to the end, one gains the impression that, in the event of incidents unforeseen, the parties, being thus dispersed in the hall, were not able to take suddenly concerted measures, and that the individuals composing them voted each as his will dictated when the common interest of the party was not plainly apparent.

The same law, with a view to preserving the Legislature from coercion or pressure from without, enacted "that no private concourse of citizens, armed or unarmed, should be admitted to or permitted to defile through the hall of session of either Council."

It regulated the individual initiative of the deputies by regulations on the subject of "motions," which were the almost literal reproduction of the corresponding portion of the rules of the National Convention.

I am not aware that the Council of Elders made any change in these rules, or any addition. The Council of Five Hundred, to the best of my knowledge, made only one addition. The Constitution forbade the formation of permanent Committees; the Councils could only form special Commissions, each of which was dissolved as soon as its special work of inquiry and report was accomplished. On the 27th of *Thermidor* of the year IV, the Five Hundred passed a rule as to the mode of appointing their special commissions. Every two months each member of the Council wrote his name in a register opened for that purpose, and

divided into sections corresponding with the various branches of legislature.

"When it was a question of proceeding to the formation of commissions which could not be appointed by the method of scrutiny, the *bureau* of the Council chose from this register, in order to propose them to the Council, members whose names appeared under the heading of the species of legislation which covered the object of the commissions."

During its whole life, from the 5th of *Brumaire* of the year IV (October 27, 1795) to the 19th of *Brumaire* of the year VIII (November 10, 1799), the activities of the Legislature never departed from the forms which the Convention had in advance imposed upon it. This exact observation on the part of the Councils of regulations which they themselves had not originated, while the Convention had so often violated those which it had imposed upon itself, is one of many proofs that under the rule of the Constitution of the year III, in circumstances less abnormal than they had been, matters were tending to become regularised.

The personnel of the two Councils was composed of 500 Conventionals and 250 new men. How many Conventionals finally left the Legislature, and how many entered or re-entered? Here is a piece of research which ought to be made ; it has not been made as yet, because the exclusions pronounced in the years V and VI, preceded by admissions, complicate the matter considerably. The non-Conventionals, whether elected in the year IV or in the following years, comprised a very considerable number of ex-Constituents and former members of the Legislature. Such deputies as had not served in any of the previous assemblies were for the most part chosen from the administrative class ; and more especially from among the departmental administrators or ex-administrators. This "graduality of functions," which had been rejected by the authors of the Constitution of the year III, was

often observed by the electors in their choice of deputies.

Of the mutilations suffered by the legislative body by the revolutionary laws of the 19th of *Fructidor* of the year V, and the 22nd of *Floréal* of the year VI, I have already spoken when treating of the application of the electoral system ; and I shall have occasion to discuss it further in treating of opinions and parties.

The powers of all the deputies were verified, in one Council as in the other, by the legislative body itself ; in the same manner as that in which the laws were made ; that is, the Council of Five Hundred ratified or invalidated its members, and those of the Council of Elders, by a resolution which the Council of Elders adopted or rejected. The rules of ratification varied in detail, and these variations are to be found in the laws relating to the matter : those of the 30th of *Floréal* of the year V and of the 12th of *Pluviôse* of the year VI.

The personnel of the Legislature was of course greatly modified by the various laws creating classes of ineligible persons, whether those which excluded *émigrés* and their relations from the exercise of political rights, or those which excepted from the law of amnesty those Conventionals who were proscribed as Terrorists. Thus, the law of the 18th of *Pluviôse* of the year IV excluded J. J. Aymé ; that of the 1st of *Prairial* of the year V excluded Barère. These are the two most notable examples ; there are many others, but to give a complete list, or to give a list of the deputies who, once elected, were erased from the list of *émigrés*, one would have to examine, from that point of view, all the *procès-verbaux* of the two Councils ; for the tabulated *procès-verbaux* contain no satisfactory information as to the verification of powers.

We have seen that the *bureau* of each of the two assemblies consisted of a president and four secre-

taries ; these were elected for one month. Here is the list of the presidents of the two Councils, the month being given during which each exercised his functions : [1]

PRESIDENTS OF THE TWO COUNCILS.

| *Month.* | *Council of Five Hundred.* | *Council of Elders.* |
|---|---|---|
| Brumaire, year IV | Daunou, then M. J. Chénier in the interim | La Révellière-Lépeaux, then Baudin (Ardennes) |
| Frimaire | M. J. Chénier | Tronchet |
| Nivôse | Treilhard | Vernier |
| Pluviôse | Camus | Goupil de Préfelne |
| Ventôse | Thibaudeau | Regnier |
| Germinal | Doulcet de Pontécoulant | Creuzé-Latouche |
| Floréal | Crassous | Le Couteulx-Canteleu |
| Prairial | Defermon | Lebrun |
| Messidor | Pelet (Lozère) | Portalis |
| Thermidor | Boissy (d'Anglas) | Dusaulx |
| Fructidor | Pastoret | Muraire |
| Vendémiaire, year V | Chasset | Roger Ducos |
| Brumaire | Cambacérès | Lacuée |
| Frimaire | Quinette | Bréard |
| Nivôse | Jean de Bry | Paradis |
| Pluviôse | Riou | Ligeret |
| Ventôse | Laloy | Poullain-Grandprey |
| Germinal | Lecointe-Puyraveau | Delmas |
| Floréal | Lamarque | Courtois |
| Prairial | Pichegru | Barbé-Marbois |
| Messidor | Henry-Larivière | Bernard Saint-Affrique |
| Thermidor | Dumolard | Dupont (Nemours) |
| Fructidor | Siméon till the 18th, then Lamarque | Laffon-Ladebat till the 18th, then Marbot |
| Vendémiaire, year VI | Jourdan (Haute-Vienne) | Crétet |
| Brumaire | Villers | Lacombe Saint-Michel |
| Frimaire | Siéyès | Rossée |
| Nivôse | Boulay (Meurthe) | Marragon |
| Pluviôse | Hardy | Bordas |
| Ventôse | Bailleul | Rousseau |

[1] I do not give a list of the secretaries ; it would occupy too much space. It may be found in the Introductions to the various indices of the *procès-verbaux* of the Legislature.

| *Month.* | *Council of Five Hundred.* | *Council of Elders.* |
|---|---|---|
| Germinal | Pison du Galand | Mollevaut |
| Floréal | Poullain-Grandprey | Poisson |
| Prairial | Creuzé-Latouche | Regnier |
| Messidor | M. J. Chénier | Marbot |
| Thermidor | Lecointe-Puyraveau | Laveaux |
| Fructidor | Daunou | Laloy |
| Vendémiaire, year VII | Jourdan (Haute-Vienne) | Decomberousse |
| Brumaire | Dubois (Vosges) | Pérès (Haute-Garonne) |
| Frimaire | Savary | Moreau |
| Nivôse | Berlier | Perrin |
| Pluviôse | Leclerc (Maine-et-Loire) | Garat |
| Ventôse | Malès | Delacoste |
| Germinal | Pons (Verdun) | Depère |
| Floréal | Heurtaut-Lamerville | Dedelay-Dagier |
| Prairial | Jean de Bry | Gourdan |
| Messidor | Génissieu | Baudin (Ardennes) |
| Thermidor | Quirot | Du Bois du Bais |
| Fructidor | Boulay (Meurthe) | Cornet |
| Vendémiaire, year VIII | Chazal | Cornudet |
| Brumaire | Lucien Bonaparte | Lemercier |

To complete the organisation of their *bureau*, each of the two Councils had also to appoint four State messengers, who were entrusted with the communications of one Council with the other, or of one of the Councils with the Directory. These messengers were, in the case of the Elders : Coupard, Geoffroy, junr., Fremanger, Vardon ; for the Five Hundred, Fournier, Sevestre, Taveau, and Projean.[1] We see that old Conventionals did not disdain to accept these posts, which at the time, perhaps, did not appear subordinate.

The *procès-verbaux* of the Convention had been

[1] The two Councils made these appointments simultaneously, on the 7th of *Brumaire*, year IV. It so fell out that the Five Hundred appointed two whom the Elders also selected : Geoffroy and Coupard. The latter chose to serve the Elders. The Five Hundred replaced them by Mirande and Taveau. On the 15th of *Frimaire* following Mirande was replaced by Projean. After that date the messengers were unchanged until the end.

written by elected secretaries. It was objected that the documents often exhibited traces of the political opinions of their authors, and also that they were often lacking in lucidity and precision. The law of the 28th of *Fructidor* enacted that the Councils should select, "each out of its midst, two clerks chosen from among those members who are the most practised in letters and the knowledge of laws: they will be entrusted with the preparation of the *procès-verbaux*." These writers of *procès-verbaux* were: for the Elders, Ducroisi and Locré; for the Five Hundred, Gleizal and Le Vasseur (of Meurthe).

The *procès-verbaux* of each Council were drawn up with exactitude, but with extreme dryness. Far less detailed than those of the Legislative Assembly and the Convention, these *procès-verbaux* rather recall those of the Constituent Assembly in the impersonality of their phrasing, but they are more complete. They are a most valuable source of information regarding the course and results of legislative debate, but they contain scarcely any information as to the speeches of the orators and the general character of the sessions. These *procès-verbaux* have been printed; those of the Council of Five Hundred in 50 volumes, and those of the Council of Elders in 49 volumes, and this collection is divided into "legislatures," or periods determined by the annual renewal of one third of the legislative body. There had already been one "legislature": the Legislative Assembly of 1791. The first session of the legislative body, from *Brumaire* of the year IV to *Floréal* of the year V, was thus called the "second legislature"; and so until the 5th "legislature," which extended from *Prairial* of the year VII until the 19th of *Brumaire* of the year VIII, when it was interrupted by the *coup-d'état*.[1]

[1] This was not the last "legislature." The sessions of the Legislative Corps and the Tribunate bear the same name, and the series was

The Council of Five Hundred also published a *Feuilleton des résolutions et des projets de résolution.*

The Council intended also to publish a *Journal des séances,* in which the debates would have been reproduced from shorthand reports ; but the Council of Elders did not approve of the resolution. For that matter, no journal had so far made use of shorthand continuously and with success. Thus the conditions of reproduction of the debates and speeches were the same under the Directory as under the Convention, and the same journals still gave the fullest accounts of them ; the *Moniteur* namely, the *Journal des débats et décrets*, and the *Republicain française*, but the latter ceased publication after the 15th of *Pluviôse* of the year VI.

The laws were made exactly as the Constitution dictated ; the Council of Elders never sought to assume an initiative that the Constitution prohibited, nor did the Council of Five Hundred protest against the checks which many of its resolutions suffered at the hands of the Elders ; in short, there was never any real conflict between the two Chambers.

It will suffice to recall what the Constitution prescribed as to the manner in which the legislative labours of the Councils were to be conducted in order to realise what actually went forward. A perusal of the *procès-verbaux* informs us that in the Council of the Five Hundred the majority of the resolutions relating to general politics or to defence against the democrats or royalists were passed in response to a message from the Directory, which pointed out a circumstantial danger and a lacuna in the laws. The Council of Five Hundred then appointed a special Commission, which deliberated on the message and proposed, or

continued from the year VIII to 1806. Thus there was a "sixth legislature," from *Nivôse* to *Germinal* of the year VIII, and a "twelfth legislature," from March to May, 1806.

did not propose, a draft resolution. Each resolution was preceded by a preamble, as was required by the Constitution, in which were enumerated the dates of the readings, &c., and in which, in fact, the Five Hundred usually expressed the motives of the resolution. These laws are therefore justified in the preambles, and preceded by prefatory matter which is not without interest for the historian, and which sometimes recalls, by its breadth and fulness, the preamble of an edict or proclamation ; this is especially true, for instance, of the preamble of the law of the 22nd of *Floréal* of the year VI.

When the Council of Elders received a resolution from the Council of Five Hundred, it at once appointed a special Commission. On the 3rd of *Messidor* of the year IV, to take an example, it received a resolution, dated the 1st of *Messidor*, relating to the postal service. " The preamble being read by the president " (says the *procès-verbal*) " and the resolution by a secretary, the Council, at the instance of the *bureau*,[1] appointed the citizens Delmas, Lebreton, and Pougeard-Dulimbert to report to the Council upon the whole." Sometimes the commission consisted of five members. As for the remaining operations of the Council of Elders, whether the resolution was or was not accompanied by a declaration of urgency, all proceeded strictly according to the rules determined by the Constitution.

## V.

It will be remembered that the executive Directory, at the time of its first formation, in *Brumaire* of the year IV, was composed of La Revellière-Lépeaux, Le Tourneur (of la Manche), Barras, and Carnot ; all five being ex-Conventionals. The Constitution prescribed

[1] The *bureau* signifies the official staff of the Council.—TRANS.

that the Directory should be renewed at the rate of one member each year ; and that during the first four years the outgoing Director should be selected by lot. The law of the 25th of *Ventôse* of the year V enacted that the drawing of lots should be made by the Directory in public audience, on the 30th of *Floréal* of each year ; and the law of the 30th of the same month that in no case could the outgoing member exercise his functions beyond the 10th of *Prairial*.

For each vacancy the Council of Five Hundred drew up a "tenfold list" of candidates, from which the Council of Elders selected the new Director.

Here is the list of the members who resigned from the Directory, and those who entered it, with the names of all the candidates mentioned in the tenfold lists :

In the year V, Le Tourneur (of la Manche) left. Tenfold list (5th of *Prairial*) : Barthélemy, minister plenipotentiary, 309 votes ; Bougainville, squadron leader, 264 ; Viellart, public accuser in the High Court, 263 ; Rédon-Beaupréau, ex-Minister, 249 ; Tarbé, ex-Minister, 245 ; Germain Garnier, ex-administrator of the department of Seine, 238 ; Borda, squadron leader, 233 ; Démeunier, ex-Constituent, 233 ; Cochon, Minister, 230 ; Beurnonville, General, 193. The Elders (on the 7th of *Prairial*) appointed Barthélemy, by 138 votes, as against 75 for Cochon. In *Fructidor* two Directors were proscribed : Barthélemy and Carnot. Tenfold list for the replacement of Barthélemy (21st of *Fructidor*) : François (Neufchâteau), Minister, 224 ; Merlin (Douai), Minister, 214 ; Masséna, General, 210 ; Garat, ex-Minister, 208 ; Gohier, ex-Minister, 201 ; Ernouf, General, 201 ; Le Carlier, ex-Constituent, 200 ; Augereau, General, 195 ; Charles Delacroix, ex-Minister, 195 ; Monge, ex-Minister, 167. The Elders (on the 22nd of *Fructidor*) elected Merlin by 74 votes. Tenfold list for the replacement of Carnot (22nd of *Fructidor*) : François (Neufchâteau),

205 ; Masséna, 194 ; Augereau, 192 ; Garat, 190 ; Gohier, 189 ; Charles Delacroix, 183 ; Monge, 179 ; Le Carlier, 178 ; Ernouf, 175 ; Guinguené, 155. The Elders, on the same day, elected François by 111 votes.

In the year VI a law of the 15th of *Ventôse* advanced the date of drawing the lots to the 20th of *Floréal* of each year ; and François was the Director to leave. Tenfold list (22nd, 23rd, and 24th of *Floréal*) : Treilhard, 234 votes ; Monge, 201 ; Garat, 191 ; Brune, General, 176 ; Gohier, 165 ; Moulin, General, 159 ; Collombel (Meurthe), ex-Conventional, 166 ; Ernouf, 165 ; Duval (Seine-Inférieure), 165 ; Génissieu, 161. The Elders elected Treilhard (on the 26th of *Floréal*) by 166 votes.

In the year VII Reubell was the outgoing Director. Tenfold list (23rd of *Floréal*) : General Lefebvre, 338 ; Siéyès, 236 ; Duval, 216 ; Gohier, 232 ; Charles Delacroix, 203 ; Lacrosse, rear-admiral, 189 ; General Moulin, 163 ; Lambrecht, 162 ; Martin, rear-admiral, 161 ; Dupuis, of the Institute, 155. The Elders (on the 27th of *Floréal*) elected Siéyès by 118 votes as against 74 for Duval. Then ensued the events which we call the *coup d'état* of the 30th of *Prairial* of the year VII. On the 29th of *Prairial* a law declared the appointment of Treilhard to the Directory to be unconstitutional and void, as being contrary to Article 136 of the Constitution, which enacted that counting from the first day of the year V the members of the Legislature could no longer be elected members of the Directory nor Ministers, either during the performance of their legislative functions, or during the first year after the expiration of those functions. Tenfold list for the replacement of Treilhard (same day) : General Lefebvre, 345 votes ; Dupuis, 330 ; Gohier, 329 ; General Masséna, 321 ; Roger Ducos, 309 ; Rear-Admiral Martin, 308 ; Charles Delacroix, 307 ; General Moulin, 304 ; General Dufour, 256 ; Charles

Pottier, ex-Conventional, 245. The same day the Elders elected Gohier by 164 votes against 16 for Delacroix. The next day (the 30th of *Prairial*) Merlin and La Revellière-Lépeaux resigned. Tenfold list (same day) for the replacement of Merlin : General Lefebvre, 324 votes ; General Masséna, 316 ; Dupuis, 311 ; Ducos, 309 ; Rear-Admiral Martin, 301 ; Rear-Admiral Lacrosse, 299 ; General Moulin, 267 ; General Marescot, 254 ; Charles Delacroix, 244 ; Florent Guiot, ex-Conventional, 236. The Elders (on the same day) elected Roger Ducos by 153 votes against 43 for Marescot. The day after the next, the 2nd of *Messidor* of the year VII, this tenfold list was submitted for the replacement of La Revellière-Lépeaux ; General Masséna, 304 votes ; Dupuis, 302 ; Rear-Admiral Martin, 300 ; General Lefebvre, 300 ; Rear-Admiral Lacrosse, 295 ; General Moulin, 260 ; Charles Pottier, 223 ; Florent Guiot, ex-Conventional, 263 ; General Pille, 259 ; General Dufour, 256. On the same day the Elders elected General Moulin by 105 votes against 68 for General Lefebvre.

From the 2nd of *Messidor* of the year VII to the 19th of *Brumaire* of the year VIII, that is to say until the end, the Directory was thus composed of Barras, Siéyès, Gohier, Roger Ducos, and Moulin.[1]

We have seen who were the first nominees of the Directory to the six Ministries. The law of the 12th of *Nivôse* of the year IV created a seventh Ministry, under the name of the General Police of the Republic.[2]

[1] The law of the 27th of *Germinal* of the year V fixed the expenses of the executive Directory for the payment of its members, its general secretary, its State messengers, its ushers, and for the cost of carriages, costumes, maintenance of the palace, &c., at 1,500,000 francs (£60,000). The annual salary of each director, fixed by the Constitution at "the value of 50,000 myriagrammes of wheat," was in actual fact from about £4,500 to £5,000 a year (120,000 to 125,000 francs) according to the year. The salary of the general secretary was £2,400.

[2] By a message of the 19th of *Vendémiaire* of the year VI the

The titulars of these seven Ministries during the whole Directory are here given :

*Justice:* 12th of *Brumaire* of the year IV, Merlin (of Douai) ; 15th of *Nivôse* of the year IV, Génissieu ; 14th of *Germinal* of the year IV, Merlin (of Douai) ; 3rd of *Vendémiaire* of the year IV, Lambrechts ; 2nd of *Thermidor* of the year VII, Cambacérès.

*Interior:*[1] 12th of *Brumaire* of the year IV, Bénézech ; 28th of *Messidor* of the year V, François (of Neufchâteau) ; 28th of *Fructidor* of the year V, Le Tourneux ; 29th of *Prairial* of the year VI, François (of Neufchâteau) ; 4th of *Messidor* of the year VII, Quinette.

*Foreign Relations:* 12th of *Brumaire* of the year IV, Charles Delacroix ; 28th of *Messidor* of the year V, Talleyrand ; 2nd of *Thermidor* of the year VII, Reinhard.

*Marine and Colonies:* 12th of *Brumaire* of the year IV, Truguet ; 28th of *Messidor* of the year IV, Pléville-le-Pelley ; 8th of *Floréal* of the year VI, Bruix ; 11th of *Messidor* of the year VII, Bourdon de Vatry.

*War:* 12th of *Brumaire* of the year IV, Aubert-Dubayet ; 19th of *Pluviôse* of the year IV, Petiet ; 5th of *Thermidor* of the year V, Schérer (the Directory at first appointed Hoche, but had to revoke the appointment, as Hoche was not of the age required by the Constitution) ; 3rd of *Ventôse* of the year VII,

Directory demanded the creation of an eighth Ministry, that of the National Domains. The Council of Five Hundred, on the 14th of *Frimaire*, heard a report by Dupont (of Mont-Blanc) on this message, which advised the extension of the functions of the proposed Ministry, which would be called the Ministry of Public Works and National Domains. Discussed on the 28th, the proposition to create an eighth Ministry was rejected by the Five Hundred, after a debate in which Renault (of Orne) and Portiez (of Oise) expressed their preference for the creation of a "Ministry of Public Instruction."

[1] The Minister of the Interior was at the same time Minister of Agriculture, Public Works, and Public Instruction. At the head of the latter service was a Director-General ; Ginguené until the year VI, then Jaquemont.

Milet de Mureau ; 14th of *Messidor* of the year VII, Bernadotte ; 28th of *Fructidor* of the year VII, Dubois-Crancé.

*Finance:* 17th of *Brumaire* of the year IV, Faipoult ; 25th of *Pluviôse* of the year IV, Ramel-Nogaret (the Directory had at first appointed Camus, who refused) ; 2nd of *Thermidor* of the year VII, Robert Lindet.

*General Police of the Republic:* 12th of *Nivôse* of the year IV, Camus (who refused) ; 14th, Merlin (of Douai) ; 14th of *Germinal* of the year IV, Charles Cochon ; 28th of *Messidor* of the year V, Lenoir-Laroche ; 8th of *Thermidor* of the year V, Sotin ; 25th of *Pluviôse* of the year VI, Dondeau ; 27th of *Floréal* of the year VI, Le Carlier ; 8th of *Brumaire* of the year VII, Duval ; 5th of *Messidor* of the year VII, Bourguignon ; 2nd of *Thermidor* of the year VII, Fouché.

The relations of these Ministers with the Directory were those of the strictest subordination. All governmental initiative came from the Directory. The Directory governed and administered,[1] and the Ministers were its first executive agents. Or rather the Directory was the real Minister, and those whom it chose for its

[1] In the National Archives is the register of the *procès-verbaux* of the sessions of the executive Directory. This register, which was very exactly kept, with subject indications on the margin, gives for the most part only a *résumé*, often insignificant, of the decisions of the Directory. But there are minutes of the decisions in the same archives. Each decision is accompanied by a *dossier*. There are 320 cases, containing, in chronological order, the essential elements of the history of the Directory. If we compare this methodical classification of the papers of the Directory with the fantastic classification of the papers of the Committee of Public Safety, we see what progress of bureaucratic regularity was accomplished during the *bourgeois* Republic. The Minister of Public Instruction has entrusted M. A. Debidour with the publication of the decisions of the Directory ; but so far this publication is still in a state of projection. There is a printed collection entitled : *Messages arrêtés et proclamations du Directoire exécutif*, Paris, Baudoin, years IV–VIII, 7 vols.

Ministers were only heads of departments,[1] whose obedience was still more strict and immediate after the *coup-d'état* of the 18th of *Fructidor*. On the 11th of *Vendémiaire* of the year VI the Directory, "considering that it was its duty to ensure the prompt execution of the decisions at which it is now arriving concerning the various parties of the general administration," ordered :

"Firstly, that such orders of the executive Directory as shall be addressed to the Ministers shall by them be transmitted to the authorities whose duty it is to execute them, under their supervision, and this within twenty-four hours at most from the time of receiving the orders. Secondly, that on the *Primidi*[2] of each decade each Minister will send the executive Directory a tabulated statement of the orders which have reached him in the preceding decade. This statement will be divided into four columns, the first of which will indicate the date and the object of each order; the second, the date of the acknowledgment of the order given by the Minister or his secretary deputed to give such receipt; the third, the date on which the Minister sent the order to the competent authorities; and the fourth, any observations which there may be occasion to make upon the whole. Thirdly, the Ministers will see that the authorities to whom they transmit the orders execute them with the least possible delay. If there is negligence or delay on the part of any one the Minister will report to the executive Directory in order to receive instructions as to what course he shall take. Fourthly, the present order shall be inserted in the *Bulletin des lois*."

If, in the application of the Constitution of the year

[1] The Directory did not allow the Legislature to exercise the slightest influence, even though indirect, on its choice or dismissal of Ministers. On the 28th of *Messidor*, year V, when Carnot proposed the dismissal of four Ministers, "because, so far as he could see, such was the wish of the majority of the Legislative Corps," Reubell cried, "That if by misfortune there was a majority of the Legislature that wished to meddle in the appointment and removal of Ministers, the Republic would on that account alone be in a state of veritable anarchy." La Revellière and Barras spoke to the same effect, and Barthélemy was alone in supporting Carnot's motion, as a means "of promoting confidence between the Legislature and the Directory." It was denied that this confidence was affected; but not that it ought to exist.

[2] *Primidi:* the first day of the Republican decade of ten days.—[TRANS.]

III, the executive Directory fulfilled the functions of the present French Cabinet or "Council of Ministers," rather than those of the President of the Republic, we may almost say that it considered itself and was considered, up to a certain point, as a Ministry responsible to the two Chambers, to use the modern phrase. It believed, and others believed, that it would not govern without a majority in the Legislature. It was to procure or to maintain this majority that it engineered the *coup d'état* of the 18th of *Fructidor* of the year V and inspired that of the 22nd of *Floréal* of the year VI. When it found itself in a minority, on the 30th of *Prairial* of the year VII, two of its members sent in their resignations.

With regard to the laws which little by little almost wholly deprived the citizens of the right of electing officials, we have seen by what an extension of powers the Directory benefited. From the 18th of *Fructidor* its authority took on, in some respects, a dictatorial character. The laws, during the whole period of the *bourgeois* Republic, never ceased to fortify the executive power.

## VI.

The Government directed the administration of all France by local agents whom it appointed or recalled. These were the *Commissaries of the Directory*. There was one attached to every administration, whether departmental or municipal.

The agent had to be a native or at least an inhabitant of the district; the Constitution, in Article 192, stated that he should be "selected from among the citizens domiciled at least a year in the department."

The Directory chose its municipal commissaries more especially from the ex-procurator-syndics of districts, ex-procurators of cummunes, and ex-mayors. The few

records (*dossiers*) of these officials to be found in the National Archives show that they were often appointed on the recommendation of the deputies of the department.[1] The post of departmental commissary was given to men who had served as procurator-general-syndics, as members of departmental administrations, or as deputies. In the list of the earliest appointments, in the year IV, I find the names of the following ex-Conventionals: Dormay (Aisne), Dherbez-Latour (Basses-Alpes), Pellissier (Bouches-du-Rhône), Roux-Fazillac (Dordogne), Robert Lindet (Eure), Maras (Eure-et-Loir), Beaugeard (Ille-et-Vilaine), Dyzèz (Landes), Venaille (Loir-et-Cher), Reynaud Haute-Loire), Servière (Lozère), Laloy (Haute-Marne), Garnier (Meuse), Carelli (Mont-Blanc), Thirion (Moselle), Lemailliaud (Morbihan), Danjou (Oise), and Terral (Tarn). There were also men who had formerly been members of the Legislature, such as Hugot (Aube), Veyrieu (Haute-Garonne), Pressac des Planches (Vienne), and François de Neufchâteau (Vosges); and the ex-Constituents Heurtaut La Merville (Cher), and Gaultier de Biauzat (Puy-de-Dôme). The one-time Minister of the Interior Paré was at the beginning the departmental commissary of the department of Seine.

There were changes in these appointments. Thus, Roux-Fazillac fulfilled his duties for a short time only. Robert Lindet refused to take up his post. Several were recalled on the eve and the morrow of the 18th of *Fructidor*. But in general these commissaries retained their posts for a long period; the majority remained at least two years in their appointments. If

[1] It was especially in the year VI that these recommendations became numerous and pressing; it was then necessary to fill the posts rendered vacant by the election of a number of commissaries to the Legislature.

we compare the lists of the departmental commissaries in the *Almanach National* of the years IV and VIII, we shall find that twelve commissaries retained their posts during the whole Directorial period ; namely, Bontoux (Hautes-Alpes), Bellouguet (Ariège), Lévêque (Calvados), Michelet (Creuse), Quirot (Doubs), Frix-David (Gers), Dyzèz (Landes) (recalled on the 25th of *Pluviôse* of the year VII and re-appointed on the 11th of *Thermidor* following), Venaille (Loir-et-Cher), Laloy (Haute-Marne), Roussel (Mont-Terrible), Thirion (Moselle), and Jouennault (Sarthe). This relative stability is remarkable when we recall the troublous times through which the Directory lived.

The salary of the departmental commissary was " one third more than that of the administrators " ; and the salary of the administrators was 1,500 myriagrammes of wheat in communes of more than 5,000 inhabitants and 1,000 myriagrammes in others—or £400 to £600. The salary of the municipal commissary was, according to the population of the commune, 400, 500, 750, or 1,000 myriagrammes of wheat (Law of the 21st of *Fructidor* of the year III).

Instructed " to supervise and require the execution of the laws," these officials had also to prosecute actions undertaken in the name of the Republic (19th of *Nivôse*, year IV), to supervise deserters (3rd of *Fructidor*, year VI), and to hasten the departure of conscripts (19th of *Fructidor*, year VI). The law of the 22nd of *Brumaire* of the year VI, which created an " agency of direct taxation," instructed the municipal commissaries " to aid the communes in the formation or rectification of the original muster-rolls and the statement of changes, and in all the labours of preparation and expedition relating to the assessment and collection of the direct taxes, and in the settlement of contentious matters." As for the departmental commissaries, they had " to draw up registers from the original registers

made by the assessors, to see them approved and passed by the departmental administrators, and also to furnish the administrative body with all information required for the preparation of their decisions upon matters of distraint or appeal." No decision could be arrived at by the departmental or municipal assemblies except in the presence of the commissary of the Directory, and "after he had been heard" (Law of the 21st of *Fructidor* of the year III).

In each canton, in fact, and in every department, the commissary of the Directory was the principal administrative authority. It was upon the reports of these commissaries that the various administrations were dismissed, expunged, and renewed. In the event of conflict between the elected authorities and the agent of the central power, the latter had always (save in rarely exceptional cases) the last word. The departmental commissary corresponded directly with the Minister of the Interior,[1] and this correspondence was more active, prompt, copious, and regular than was ever that of the National Agents or even the representatives "on mission." What remains of this correspondence is unfortunately dispersed, according to the different subjects, in different series of the National Archives. But I have, I think, read a sufficient portion of it to enable me to grasp its general character. One perceives, from such a perusal, that every day (although the powers of the departmental administrations were the same as in 1791) the habit was becoming established and every day more fixed, of demanding of the central Government, and receiving from Paris, the solution of the majority of the questions that arose

[1] At the Ministry of the Interior the functions of the *chef de bureau* who was in charge of the correspondence with the commissaries of Directory were fulfilled in turns by Champagneux (years IV and V); Chassey (year VI); Devèze (year VII); and Roux-Fazillac (year VIII).

in the course of their labours. Through the institution of the commissaries ; in the course of administration ; through a general tendency of the public mind towards unity ; not only did the movement of administrative decentralisation which had appeared to evolve during the Thermidorian period come to a full stop, but a system of centralisation began to develop which was far more fully defined than in the Terrorist period of the Revolutionary Government ; a system that every day became more firmly rooted and more powerful.[1]

At the same time the moral and material unity of France, already assured in 1793 and 1794 by the defeat of Federalism and the triumph of the Mountain, was becoming more firmly established. There were no further attempts on the part of Federalism. A country which had been detached from France—Corsica—came back to the fold.

The annexation of fresh territory did not impair this unity ; the departments formed by Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine remained under a special government, but would doubtless become entirely Gallicised in time.

It seems to me that the tie uniting Frenchmen was bound yet closer, under the Directory, by the use of the aerial telegraph.[1] Certainly the telegraph was not

[1] To gain some idea of this centralisation one should read the deliberations of a central departmental administration ; for example that of Lozère, of which the decisions, &c., have been printed. See the collection entitled : *Déliberations de l'administration départmentale de la Lozère et de son directoire, de 1790 à 1800*, published by the Society of Agriculture, Industry, Sciences and Arts of Lozère, under the auspices of the Council General and the direction of Mr. Ferd. André, archivist of the department : Mende, 1882–84, 4 vols.

[2] The National Archives contain a number of telegraphic bulletins of the years IV and VIII.—It will of course be understood that the instrument here spoken of had nothing in common with the electric telegraph, but probably consisted of a line of what we should call semaphore signals, planted on hill-tops and visible one from another.

as yet an instrument of administrative centralisation, in the sense of the Directory employing it to transmit orders to its agents, for it was not so employed. But although it was reserved for the transmission of military and diplomatic despatches, we may call it an instrument of moral unification. Before the telegraph, great events were never known at the same time in all parts of France ; now they were known almost everywhere, and almost simultaneously. The impressions and emotions of Frenchmen were on the way to becoming simultaneous ; whether the telegraph gave news of the health of Jean de Bry, colleague of the French plenipotentiaries murdered in Germany, or whether it announced the landing of Bonaparte at Fréjus, or transmitted the results of the *coup d'état* of the 18th of *Brumaire* in the year VIII.

Such, in its most general characteristics, was the quality of the administrative centralisation of the period of the Directory.

## VII.

Since the closing of the Jacobin Club in Paris (on the 21st of *Brumaire* of the year III) we may almost say that there was no further question of people's clubs, and the period of their power seemed at an end. On the 6th of *Fructidor* of the year III, after the reading of the reports of the Committees of Public Safety, General Security, and Legislation, the Convention had passed the following decree :

"Every assembly known by the name of *club* or *popular society* is dissolved ; in consequence the halls in which the aforesaid assemblies held their sittings will be closed forthwith, and the keys will be

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Such a system could easily in competent hands despatch a short message at a rate of 100 miles an hour or more.—[TRANS.]

deposited, together with the registers and papers, in the secretariat of the communal buildings."[1]

On the other hand, the Constitution (in Article 361) stated that "no assembly of citizens might constitute itself a popular society." It implicitly authorised (Article 362) "private societies occupying themselves with political questions," but none of these societies might "correspond with another, nor become affiliated to another, nor hold public meetings, composed of members of the society and visitors as distinguished one from the other, nor impose conditions of admission or eligibility, nor arrogate to itself rights of exclusion, nor cause its members to carry any external sign of their membership."

At the commencement of the Directory there were clubs. Thus the Jacobins tried to re-constitute themselves in the former convent of the Génovéfains near the Panthéon, under the name of the Panthéon Club (*Société du Panthéon*). A few Parisian *cafés* were practically clubs during the whole period of the Directory. Thus the democrats used to meet and discuss matters at the Café Chrétien, and the Café Bains-Chinois. In the year V, before the 18th of *Fructidor*, a number of secret royalists used to meet in a house in the Rue de Clichy, and were known as the *Clichyens*. The Directorial republicans also had a club, the *Salm*, or Constitutional Club.

On the 8th of *Ventôse* of the year IV the Directory had ordered the closing of the Society of the Panthéon and of certain other clubs, as "illegal and inimical to public tranquillity"; and on the following day it sent a message to the Council of Five Hundred requesting

[1] According to this law, the registers of the popular societies ought to be among the various municipal archives. However, only a very few are to be found there. Many of these registers must have been destroyed. Some exist in private collections; a certain number have been published.

them to take measures to prevent the reconstitution of the clubs. On the 8th of *Germinal* following Mailhe made a report on this subject, and, among other restrictive measures, proposed to proscribe any political society in which the number of members present should rise above 60 in the communes of more than 100,000 inhabitants, or above 40, 30, or 20 in communes of less than 100,000, 20,000, or 3,000 inhabitants respectively. Several times adjourned, the motion was not debated.

After the elections of *Germinal* in the year V the new majority of the Five Hundred replaced this motion on the general orders of the day. On the 24th of *Messidor* they heard a report by Duplantier, who resumed Mailhe's motion, but increased its severity by this article : " The societies may not meet more than twice a month, and their meetings will terminate at sunset." This appeared ridiculous. On the 3rd of *Thermidor* Vaublanc proposed the simpler alternative of a general prohibition, and this proposal led to the law of the 7th of *Thermidor*, worded thus :

" Any private society occupying itself with political questions is provisionally prohibited. Such individuals as shall assemble in such societies shall be delivered over to the police-courts [tribunals of correctional police] in order there to receive punishment as those guilty of riotous assemblage. The proprietors or principal tenants of the premises in which the societies shall assemble shall be condemned by the same courts to pay a fine of 100 francs and to undergo three months' imprisonment."

This law was repealed by the revolutionary law of the 19th of *Fructidor* following, Articles 37 and 38 :

" The law of the 7th of *Thermidor* last relating to private societies occupying themselves with political questions in which principles shall be professed contrary to the Constitution of the year III, accepted by the French people, will be dissolved ; and such of its members as shall have professed such principles will be prosecuted and punished conformably with the law of the 27th of *Germinal* of the year V."

Thus the members of all opposition clubs exposed themselves to the risk of the guillotine or of deportation. Consequently there were at first, after the 18th of *Fructidor*, none but clubs of governmental opinions. The Cercle Constitutional reappeared. No royalist clubs were founded. In the year VII, when military reverses and the danger of the country re-established, to a certain extent, the "Red Terror," and led to a provisional alliance between the Directorial republicans and the democratic republicans, the old Jacobin Clubs was re-constituted, on the 18th of *Messidor*, under the name of the *Réunion d'amis de la liberté et de l'égalité, séante au Manège*. They were deprived of their meeting-place by the Council of Elders on the 9th of *Thermidor*. They then met in a house in the Rue du Bac. From this the Directory expelled them on the 26th of *Thermidor*. They then disappeared; but at the same period, and under their auspices, Jacobin clubs were founded in Bordeaux, Lille, Lorient, Rouen, and Amiens.[1]

On the 1st of *Thermidor* of the year VII the Five Hundred had appointed a special Commission, instructed to prepare a projected law relating to clubs. This project, and others which were submitted later, had not yet been discussed when the *coup d'état* of the 18th of *Brumaire* was effected.

## VIII.

Before the 18th of *Fructidor* of the year V there existed a partial liberty of the periodical press; after that date the periodical press enjoyed no liberty whatever.

In the early days of the Directory the journals and their writers found themselves under the same system as that which obtained during the Thermidorian period;

[1] See the *Moniteur*, 26th of *Thermidor*, year VII.

which is to say that the press, theoretically free by law, was hampered in fact by all that remained of the Terrorist laws, or by Article 145 of the Constitution, which allowed the Directory to issue warrants of arrest against all persons who might be presumed accomplices of a conspiracy against the security of the State. It was, for example, in virtue of this Article that on the 19th of *Pluviôse* of the year IV the editor and the printer of the *Censeur des Journaux*, suspected of royalist tendencies, were arrested, and seals set upon their papers.[1]

The disguised royalists, and their allies the moderates of all kinds—that is, the opposition of the Right—demanded a law which should ratify and regulate the liberty of the press. This was the purpose of a motion which Boissy d'Anglas put forward, in the Council of the Five Hundred, on the 19th of *Frimaire* of the year IV ; and the Council appointed a commission of five members to study the subject ; whose reporter, Louvet, declared on the 16th of *Ventôse* that in view of the danger to which the royalist vote subjected the Republic, the commission had not been able to agree as to the means of repression, and requested an addition to its numbers of ten members, in order that a deciding vote might be taken. Boissy d'Anglas protested, saying that he had not intended, in submitting his motion, to provoke prohibitive laws, but, on the contrary, to obtain guarantees for the writers for the press. Tallien spoke to the same effect. The Council proceeded to the orders of the day.

On the 23rd of *Ventôse*, despite the objections of the Right, the debate was resumed, the question being now whether prohibitive measures should be passed. Pastoret claimed absolute liberty, alleging the example of the Americans. Louvet spoke unfavourably of absolute liberty.

[1] See *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. ii. p. 753.

To the objection "that on account of the great services rendered by a free press, its inconveniences must be endured," he replied :

"But the cannon, the musket, and the bayonet, during the last three years, have also rendered immense services to liberty. Nevertheless, what would you do if a soldier, too keenly penetrated by the doctrine of *unlimited liberty*, were to run through the streets proclaiming absolute liberty and the absolute impunity of the bayonet, and, justifying himself by the services he had or had not rendered, were to give a random jab at the first journalist who should come along?"

He denounced a new aristocracy : "The journalists have become our priests and our nobles in one ; directing, like the first, the opinion they debauch, and threatening, like the second, to overthrow the Government that will not tolerate their usurpations." Louvet asked if the Revolution was ended. "Have you already taken any of those stupendous measures, which, so to speak, close a revolution? Have you, like the Americans, deported all the royalists? No. . . ." And so long as the Revolution endured, so long, according to Louvet, was the liberty of the press inadmissible ; indeed, he went so far as to demand the application of Article 355 of the Constitution, which allowed the suspension of the liberty of the press for a year.

The debate was prolonged until the 29th of *Ventôse*. The Left, in the persons of Jean de Bry, Delaunay, M. J. Chénier, and Lanthenas, spoke persistently against the liberty of the press. The Right demanded the unlimited liberty of the press, in the persons of Cadroy and Lemerer. The words of the latter attracted attention.

"Founders of the Republic," he said (on the 24th of *Ventose*), "do not attempt to unite two things that are, by nature, irreconcilable. You have desired the Republic ; you cannot have desired that it should exist without passions, without uneasiness—this form of government in which all the passions are exalted, in which all characters are intensified, and all talents are unfolded, and in which men are truly

all that they can be. In a popular government these elements are the fount of life and energy, and without them the State would be a corpse, quickly reduced to dust. With the liberty of the press the factions are not really dangerous, for they balance and moderate themselves reciprocally; but stamp out the liberty of writing and immediately a faction arises; all voices are dumb; no accusation is heard; and the faction reigns and singly directs the press, which serves as an instrument for perpetrating its tyranny."

Finally Doulcet de Pontécoulant persuaded the Council to proceed to the orders of the day, refusing any measure prohibiting the liberty of the press (on the 29th of *Ventôse*). According to the *Moniteur* "only five or six members rose to protest."

But these "prohibitive measures" were already in existence; they were the Terrorist laws; not abrogated, yet already lapsed, for juries no longer applied them, by reason of their very severity: nearly all these laws pronounced the death penalty. The law of the 27th of *Germinal* of the year IV ratified these laws, but allowed the juries to substitute the penalty of deportation for that of death, in the following terms:

"All persons are guilty of crimes against the internal security of the Republic and against the individual security of citizens, and will be punished by the penalty of death, conformably with Article 612 of the code of penalties and offences, who, by their speech or printed writings, whether distributed or placarded, shall provoke the dissolution of the national representation or that of the executive Directory, or the murder of the members comprising them, or the re-establishment of royalty or of the Constitution of 1793, or of the Constitution of 1791, or of any government other than that established by the Constitution of the year III, accepted by the French people, or the invasion of public property, or the pillage or division of private properties, in the name of the agrarian law or in any other manner. The death penalty mentioned in the present Article will be commuted to that of deportation should the jury declare the crime to be attended by extenuating circumstances."

Another law, dated the 28th, obliged the journals to indicate the names of their writers and printers, and declared the law of the 27th applicable not only to

journalists, but to printers, distributers, vendors, news-agents, and bill-posters.

The penalty of deportation for an offence of the press was still considered too severe by the jury, which accordingly acquitted journalists of the Right and Left, the royalist Richer de Sérisy indifferently with the democrat Lebois. Despite the terrible threats of the law, the opposition press continued, thanks to the indulgence of the jury, to criticise the Government.

The Directory complained incessantly of this state of things. The Council of Five Hundred (on the 14th of *Vendémiaire* of the year V) having denounced to the Directory a counter-revolutionary journal, the *Courrier des armées et du Corps législatif*, it replied, on the 9th of *Brumaire*, by a message in which we read :

"The journalists of all parties have been prosecuted in vain : judges and juries dare not sentence them ; all these guilty persons baffle and deride the law. Proceedings against the *Postillon des armées* would only cause one more scandal, by the impunity which that journal would enjoy in its turn. This frantic condition of things will cease only when we have been able, by some novel measure, to put a curb on the license of the journalists, who, forming themselves into a corporation, and endeavouring to constitute themselves as a magistracy, and the first magistracy in the Republic, and inviolable moreover, are setting themselves up as dictators, and are pretending to the monstrous privilege of being free to commit all crimes with impunity, without our being able even to complain of them."

Whereupon the Directory demanded a prohibitive law, conformably with Article 355 of the Constitution.

Despite the opposition of Pastoret [1] a special Commission was appointed, in whose name Daunou, on the 5th of *Frimaire*, submitted a projected resolution whose purpose was : Firstly, to forbid news-sellers to cry out the contents of the journals ; secondly, to close

[1] On the day before, the 8th of *Brumaire*, Pastoret had submitted a project for a law against calumny, according to which the offence would be dealt with by the correctional police.

the press galleries, and to create, under the name of the *Séances du Corps législatif*, a "journal in which would be literally transcribed all that was delivered at the public sessions of either Council"; thirdly, to repress calumny (by means of the correctional police). In his report Daunou insisted emphatically on the grievous effects of such calumnies, by means of which the press was becoming tyrannical.

"Citizens," he said, "do not imagine that prison and scaffold are the sole instruments of terror; it is easier for a republican heart to prefer death to treachery than it is to choose between the voice of conscience and certain infamy. Is it given to many men to offer the country the irreparable sacrifice of a hitherto flawless reputation, and to show no hesitation before a duty that can be performed only with opprobrium? How often, in so painful a position, will not men postpone their courage till a period when juster laws shall have begun, at least, to weaken the empire of calumny, and have commenced to guarantee more surely the liberty of legislative opinion? This, you say, would be feeble and pusillanimous. So be it: but what reason have you to suppose that those whom you abandon without defence to enemies without discretion, will always find in their energy of character alone the means of resistance that your institutions refuse them? Why should the safety of the Constitution depend upon the strict accomplishment of the most tedious duties, and why should the only chance of maintaining the government lie in the highest possible degree of heroism in its functionaries? I am well aware that virtue is the chief preserver of republican states; but that does not mean that we must, in order to give virtue the widest possible field, maintain all kinds of crime and license in the highest state of activity."

During the debate on this project (from the 13th to the 29th of *Frimaire* of the year V) the royalist peril was denounced by the republicans, and denied by the disguised royalists. It was then (on the 18th of *Frimaire*) that one of these latter, Delahaye, created a sensation by saying, from the tribune: "I regard the French Republic attentively, and I ask myself: Where is it, this royalism of which such a pother is made?" Finally the Council detached from Daunou's project the article prohibiting the crying out of the

contents of the journals, and this article, adopted by both Councils, became law on the 3rd of *Nivôse* of the year V.

On the 17th of *Pluviôse* Talot attacked the royalist press, and proposed that the rest of Daunou's project should be debated. Darracq opposed this proposal. He demanded that the Directory, without new legislation, should take measures against the journalists, as had been done against the prostitutes. "For," he said, "the journalists are true prostitutes; do they not number their street-walkers, their promenaders? Do they not, like the prostitutes, distil venom?" There were protests, and Darracq was called to order; but Lecointe-Puyraveau having read an article by the journalist Barruel-Bauvert in which General Bonaparte was insulted by the phrase: *Veni, vidi, fugi*, the Council decided to put the question of the offences of the press upon the general orders.

On the 19th of *Pluviôse* Dubois-Crancé, with the aid of the documents of the Brottier conspiracy, attacked the journalists as the accomplices of this conspiracy:

"Amid the darkness with which the conspirators have covered themselves you may yet discover," he said, "certain gleams of light. Here, for instance, we have the *Précurseur*, the most infamous paper existing, which, at immense cost, precedes the others by forty-eight hours, in order to poison the entire South; there is the *Éclair*, which, in the North, outstrips the other journals in an equal degree. In Paris the execrable paper of Barruel-Bauvert is distributed gratis. During our campaigns the *Gardien de la Constitution*, the *Messager du soir*, and many other libellous sheets, were swarming everywhere, although there were no subscribers. Finally, you have the proof that the *Journal des Elections*, whose influence is so strongly recommended by Louis XVIII and his agents, is also distributed with profusion. These are the familiar trumpets of the counter-revolution; these are the moderators, the magistrates of opinion, who are in league with the agents of Louis XVIII."

The speaker demanded: Firstly, the despatch to the Directory of a message requesting it to apply the

existing laws ; secondly, the suppression of the galleries reserved in the hall of the Council for the use of journalists.

The Council adopted the first proposition, rejected the second, discussed the proposal relating to calumnious statements (on the 20th and 21st of *Pluviôse*), referred it to the Commission (on the 22nd), and then passed it with amendments (on the 26th). It also resolved on the issue of a journal containing shorthand reports of the sessions. The Council of Elders rejected the resolution relating to the official journal. On the 26th of *Germinal* it heard Portalis read a report unfavourable to the resolution relating to calumnious statements. "A law against the liberty of the press," said Portalis, "would be a sentence of prohibition against human reason. . . . Liberty will be corrected by liberty itself."

"The liberty of the press must be inviolable ; but the abuses of this liberty must not go unpunished. What is needed is not a particular law bearing upon the offences of the press. The law we need is a general law relating to verbal insults and injurious statements, whether written, printed, or inscribed, and to libels contrary to the laws and to decent manners."

The resolution was unanimously rejected (on the 9th of *Floréal*).

The Council of Five Hundred resumed the question yet once more. On the 30th of *Thermidor*, upon a motion of Siméon's, it formed a Commission instructed to submit a project for the suppression of press offences. But the *coup d'état* of the 18th of *Fructidor* took place before the Commission could present its report.

The anxieties expressed in the tribune as to the danger caused to the Republic by the royalist press were not without foundation. The press had in vain protested that it was not royalist ; for what but royalism could have profited by the incessant attacks, open or

hypocritical, which it was always delivering upon the essential principles and proceedings of the Revolution? Above all it attacked, with the most virulent calumny, the men of the Revolution ; not only in the past, not only the ex-Terrorists, but in the present ; and it attacked, moreover, the Government leaders, the ministers, the Directors, both in their private and in their public life.

Men were not yet accustomed to these drawbacks to liberty, and the members of the Government, face to face with these personal attacks, this system of defamation, were naïvely indignant. Some even sought to avenge themselves. Thus on the 10th of *Pluviôse* of the year V the Abbé Poncelin, director of the *Courrier républicain*, in which Barras had been attacked, was under some pretext decoyed to that part of the Luxembourg Palace occupied by Barras, shut in a room, and thrashed.

Before the 18th of *Fructidor* the opposition of the Left did less to embarrass the Government. The democratic journals, of which the principal was the *Journal des hommes libres* (edited by the ex-Conventional Charles Duval) had no idea of overthrowing the Directory, but wished rather to put it on its guard against the royalists. The republican journals were usually all in agreement to defend the principles of the Revolution.

These latter, too, were too few in number to permit of division in the face of the common enemy. Thus in *Messidor* of the year IV there were only four professed republican journals (their adversaries called them Jacobin) : the *Sentinelle*, edited by Louvet ; the *Ami des Lois*, by Poultier ; the *Journal des hommes libres*, by Charles Duval ; and the *Journal des Patriotes de '89*, by Méhée and Réal (this latter paper disappeared on the 30th of *Thermidor* following). It is true that the Directory published two

official journals—the *Rédacteur*, the *Journal des Défenseurs de la patrie*, the latter relating to military affairs, the former to affairs of the interior.[1]

As for the journals of the Right, we shall see later on, by the decree of the 22nd of *Fructidor*, which proscribed them, what were their numbers and their titles.

As to the number of subscribers on either side, we have no certain data from which to form even approximate statistics. I must, however, cite what is said on this subject by the *Éclair* (a moderate or disguisedly royalist paper), in its issue of the 2nd of *Messidor* of the year IV; noting that its assertions were not contested by the republican journals. According to the *Éclair* the "Jacobin" journals had only 4,000 subscribers between the four; while the moderate journals boasted 150,000.[2]

If these figures are correct, they tell us only that the journals of the Right had by far the largest public; and if we remember that, except in a few large cities, the provincial press was almost non-existent, we see that the papers had very few readers in the years IV and V.

Two facts explain this paucity of readers; firstly, the peasants, that is to say, three-quarters of the French, had not yet formed the habit of reading the

[1] The *Rédacteur*, which is a collection of most important information as to the history of the Directory, had an official portion (laws, orders, proclamations, decisions of the Government) and a non-official portion (general articles and miscellaneous news). A note published at the head of the issue of the 11th of *Thermidor* of the year V warned the public that this journal had no longer any official character. But there was no change corresponding to this note; the Directory still continued to publish, in the *Rédacteur*, its official doings, and continued, in the same tone and in the same manner, to defend the governmental policy.

[2] This figure should not be very far from the truth. At the commencement of the year VII, when the stamp law was first applied 150 000 journals were stamped in Paris every day.

journals ; and the Parisian working classes had abandoned it since they had ceased to exercise or demand their political rights, and for the rest the journals were too dear for them to buy ; so that this number of 150,000 odd subscriptions sufficed for the whole *bourgeoisie*, because at that time journals were read more especially in the reading-rooms,[1] so that one subscription meant a number of readers.

Whatever may have been the actual number of readers, the influence of the press was undeniable and obvious, and it was to this influence that the Directory attributed the success of the moderate opposition in the elections of the year V.; and the authors of the *coup d'état* of the 18th of *Fructidor* hastened before all else to take measures against journalists in particular and the press in general.

On the 18th of *Fructidor*, the Directory ordered the arrest of the authors and printers of thirty-one journals, as " accused of conspiracy against the external and internal security of the Republic, and especially of inciting to the re-establishment of royalty and the dissolution of the Republican Government." They were not brought to trial. The law of the 19th ordained the deportation of one of them, Suard. On the 22nd, " considering that, among the enemies of the Republic and the royalist conspiracy, the most dangerous and active have been those journalists paid and directed by the agents of royalty; considering that, in order to stifle the existing conspiracy, to prevent civil war and the general effusion of blood which would inevitably follow, nothing is of greater urgency than the purging of French soil of the declared enemies of liberty and the Constitution," a law was carried which proscribed not only the journalists specified by the warrant issued by the Directory of the 18th, but of

*Cabinets de lecture:* rooms in booksellers' or elsewhere where the journals were exposed.—[TRANS.]

several others. The first article of this law is worthy of reproduction, since it contains a list of the counter-revolutionary journals of the period :

"The proprietors, publishers, managers, directors, authors, and editors of the journals hereafter designated will be without delay deported to such place as the executive Directory may determine.

1. *Le Mémorial.*
2. *Le Messager du soir.*
3. *Le Miroir.*
4. *Nouvelles politiques nationales et étrangères.*
5. *L'Observateur de l'Europe.*
6. *Perlet.*
7. *Le Petit Gauthier ou la Petite Poste.*
8. *Le Postillon des armées ou Bulletin général de France.*
9. *Le Précurseur.*
10. *La Quotidienne.*
11. *Rapsodies du jour.*
12. *Le Spectateur du Nord.*
13. *Le Tableau de Paris.*
14. *Le Thé.*
15. *La Tribune publique.*
16. *Le Véridique.*
17. *L'Argus.*
18. *Annales catholiques.*
19. *Les Actes des Apôtres.*
20. *L'Accusateur public.*
21. *L'Anti-terroriste.*
22. *L'Aurore.*
23. *Le Censeur des Journaux.*
24. *Le Courrier de Lyon.*
25. *Courrier extraordinaire.*
26. *Courrier républicain.*
27. *Le Cri public ou Frères et Amis.*
28. *Le Défenseur des vieilles institutions.*
29. *Le Déjeûner.*
30. *L'Écho.*
31. *L'Éclair.*
32. *L'Europe littéraire.*
33. *Gazette française.*
34. *Gazette universelle.*
35. *Le Grondeur.*
36. *L'Impartial bruxellois.*
37. *L'Impartial européen.*
38. *L'Invariable.*
39. *Journal des journaux.*
40. *Le Journal de Colonies.*
41. *Journal général de France ou le Gardien de la Constitution.*
42. *L'Abréviateur universel.*"

Their property was provisionally sequestrated; and the Directory was authorised to make domiciliary visits to enforce the execution of this law.

Against the press in general the Directory finally obtained the prohibitive measures which it had already demanded, and which were authorised, provisionally and for the space of a year, by Article 355 of the Constitution. This was the object of Article 35 of the law of the 19th of *Fructidor* of the year V, which read as follows : " The journals and other periodical sheets

and the presses which issue them are placed for a year under the inspection of the police, who may subject them to prohibition, under the terms of Article 355 of the Constitution." A Directorial order of the 23rd of *Brumaire* of the year VI decided that such prohibitions could not be imposed by the Minister of Police, or by the central or municipal administrations, except with the approval of the Directory. Article 35 of the law of the 19th of *Fructidor* of the year V was postponed for a year by the law of the 9th of *Fructidor* of the year VI. It was abrogated by the law of the 14th of *Thermidor* of the year VII.

Thus from the 22nd of *Fructidor* of the year V to the 14th of *Thermidor* of the year VII, the Government had the right to suppress such journals as displeased it; but it had no right of preventive censorship.

This being so, the suppressed royalist journals could reappear under other names. The Directory suppressed them anew. Some were resuscitated a second time; some a number of times,[1] under yet other titles; but very few journalists had the courage to oppose the Government directly, as they would have run the risk of deportation.

The opposition of the Left, however, was definite enough, both before and after the *coup d'état* of the 22nd of *Floréal* of the year VI, and the *Journal des hommes libres*, several times suppressed, assumed in turn the titles *Persévérant*, *Républicain*, *Journal des Francs*, *Correspondance des représentants*, *Tribune nationale*, and *Lumière* without ceasing to express revolutionary principles. But this opposition was not of an obstinate party character; it ceased as soon as the Directory ceased to attack the advanced republicans.

[1] See, among others, the order of the Directory of the 17th of *Messidor*, year VI, which suppressed simultaneously a number of journals which had changed their names.

But it was the journals of the Right that appeared formidable to the Directory after the 18th of *Fructidor*. Reading them to-day they seem colourless, vapid, and the reverse of courageous. There are scarcely any leading articles on home politics ; there are accounts of the sessions of the Councils, usually short and insignificant ; a few miscellaneous facts ; foreign news, and news of the Army ; such are the contents of these papers, many of which seem copied one from the other ; indeed, the royalist journals most of the time were scarcely more than reproductions of the republican journals.[1]

One has to read the police reports, or the preamble of the writs of suppression, in order to understand what was the nature of the opposition of the journals of which the Government complained.

The Government reproached these journals with making allusions which it considered treacherous, and especially with criticising the Dutch Republic, for example, or the Swiss Republic, as they could not criticise their own ; and with saying of the directories of these republics what they dared not say of the French Directory. It further reproached them with quoting from foreign journals reports unfavourable to the French armies ; even when they gave such reports with all reserve, and qualified them as absurd. The eyes of the agents of the central bureau of the canton of Paris raked the consciences of the journalists with a subtlety all their own. When, for example, the

[1] Thus, on the 23rd of *Thermidor* of the year VI, *L'Ami des Lois*, a republican Directorial journal, complained of being copied by contemporaries of every shade : "*L'Ami des Lois* appears in the evenings, while the *Publiciste*, the *Journal des Campagnes et des Armées*, the *Bien Informé*, the *Propagateur*, the *Observateur*, the *Clef au Cabinet*, the *Chronique universelle*, the *Surveillant*, &c., are printed during the night and are distributed in the morning ; these wait for our paper in order to appropriate shamelessly all its most interesting comments" (*Paris pendant la réaction*, &c., vol. v. p. 38).

*Messager des rélations extérieures*, in *Ventôse* of the year VII, dared to print *France* instead of *the French Republic*, it meant that the *Messager* was royalist. Certainly these journals did apply themselves to pricking the Government by allusions so discreet that for us they are almost indistinguishable ; or by the choice and arrangement of news, or by abstaining from enthusiasm. But the constant peril to which they were exposed taught the journalists to be as prudent as they were ingenious, and their prudence increased from day to day ; to such a point, indeed, that during the elections of the year VII they did not intervene in any way whatever in the electoral struggle ; and the most with which the police could reproach them was that they applied the terms " anarchist " or " Jacobin " to certain deputies. Under such a system the periodical press became impotent through its utter insignificance ; and this destruction of the press contributed to the destruction of public opinion.

We may take it that after the 18th of *Fructidor* of the year V any serious political opposition on the part of the press was no longer possible. Every independent journalist was living under the threat of deportation. Sometimes a journal was warned before suppression, but more often it was suppressed without warning.

The ideal of the Directory was to attain a state of affairs under which it would actually edit the principal journals. In *Nivôse* of the year VI it sent detailed political instructions to the following journals : *Amis des Lois*, *Journal des hommes libres*, *Patriote français*, *Journal des Campagnes et des Armées*, *Messager des Lois*, *Moniteur*, *Journal de Paris*, *Ami de la patrie*, *Rédacteur*. It then drew up articles for these journals, of which the notes are still in existence.

Measures were imposed of a totally different character with a view to rendering the conditions of

the periodical press still more difficult: namely, the laws relating to the postage and the stamping of journals.

Under the old *régime* the cost of posting journals was 4 deniers. The law of August 17, 1791, altered those conditions. It fixed the cost of posting journals at 8 deniers per printer's sheet for daily journals, and four deniers per half-sheet. There were only a few journals of the large *format*, like the *Moniteur*, which had to pay 8 deniers. The others, being in octavo or quarto, paid only 4 deniers. A law of the 6th of *Messidor* of the year IV raised the postage to 5 centimes per printer's sheet or fraction of a sheet if posted to an address in the city in which it was published (or in the suburbs), and 10 centimes for longer distances. This meant that Parisian journals other than the *Moniteur* had to pay, instead of 4 deniers, a sum equivalent to 24 deniers per number. This spelt ruin to the influence of the Parisian press in the departments. Such complaints were made that the law was repealed by that of the 4th of *Thermidor* of the year IV, which fixed the cost of posting at 4 centimes per sheet and 2 per half-sheet.[1] This was dearer than the rate of August 17, 1791; but the journals managed to survive, despite the competition of the *Rédacteur* and the *Journal des Défenseurs de la patrie*, which the Directory sent post free.

The Directorial republicans had such a horror of the royalist papers that in order to stop their circulation they would willingly have stopped the circulation of all the journals. On two separate occasions they persuaded the Five Hundred to adopt resolutions with the object of raising the cost of postage. On the 13th of *Brumaire* of the year V a resolution had increased this

[1] A denier = $\frac{1}{24}$ of 10 centimes. Thus the rate for papers of small *format*, at first 4 deniers, or $\frac{1}{6}$ of a penny, was raised to a penny for the country post, and then reduced to $\frac{1}{5}$, or about 5 deniers.—[TRANS.]

price to 10 centimes per sheet, but that the Elders threw it out, after a debate in which the royalist Barbé-Marbois cited the example of the Americans : " Among this free and happy people," he said, " of all the necessaries of life the cheapest is the newspaper." He demonstrated, by facts and figures, what would be the fate of the press if the resolution were adopted.

" I believe," he said, " that a sheet might be posted for 3 deniers ; it used to be done for 4, and I do not think it should be any higher. Generally, a subscription to a paper costs 30 livres ; deducting 6 francs for the post, there remain 24 to pay the cost of printing and paper, and to pay the proprietors and writers ; but if you increase the postage to 18 francs only 12 are left for expenses and profit and salaries. This is not enough ; it amounts to an actual prohibition of the liberty to write. People may say : increase the price of the subscription ; but then only rich men will be able to afford the papers. . . ."

On the 24th of the following *Frimaire* a new resolution was adopted without debate by the Five Hundred. It fixed the postage of journals at 15 deniers per sheet ; the half and quarter-sheet would pay in proportion. Periodicals in *brochure* form—that is, bound—would pay 30 deniers. The reporter to the Elders, Lebreton, stated that the Administration of Posts admitted that 8 deniers per sheet would suffice, and that if the figure of 30 deniers for bound periodicals were adopted, the Council would kill at a blow such useful periodicals as the *Magasin encyclopédique*, the *Mercure français*, the *Décade*, the *Journal du lycée des Arts*, and the *Journal des mines*. The resolution was rejected, and the cost of posting journals remained fixed at 4 centimes per sheet, and 2 centimes per half-sheet.

Although these laws and these facts are anterior to the 18th of *Fructidor*, they must be remembered if we wish to understand the bearing of the law of the 20th of *Ventôse* of the year VII, which forbade private individuals to undertake the transport of letters,

journals, and periodicals. The fact was that by making arrangements with private postal enterprises, certain supposedly royalist journals had obtained terms more advantageous than those of the postal administration, and their public and their influence were accordingly enlarged.

The establishment of the Stamp Act had more serious effects. The financial law of the 9th of *Vendémiaire* of the year VI enacted that with the exception of periodicals relating to the arts and sciences, appearing not oftener than once a month, and containing at least two printers' sheets of matter, all journals and placards would be "subjected to the necessity of a stamp, affixed or otherwise." The law of the 13th of the same month definitively settled the matter in these terms: "The value of the stamp, affixed or otherwise, for journals and placards, will be of 5 centimes (or 1 sou) for each sheet of 25 square decimetres of surface [1] (or 341 square thumbs), and of 3 centimes (7 deniers and a fifth) for each half-sheet of the same measure." On the 3rd of *Brumaire* of the year VI a decision of the Directory stated that journals must be printed only on paper stamped before printing. The law of the 6th of *Prairial* of the year VII subjected supplementary sheets to the same rule.

As soon as this law was applied—that is, on the 15th of *Vendémiaire*—all the journals had to increase the price of their subscriptions in the following proportions: the *Moniteur*, which was composed of one sheet, raised its annual subscription from 80 livres to 100; the *Journal de Paris*, which contained only half a sheet, raised its subscription from 25 livres to 42. I do not know whether the prices of admission or subscriptions

[1] This gives the dimensions of the sheet as rather less than 20 × 20 inches; or 24 × 16 almost exactly; so that a quarto journal would measure 12 × 8, and of course contain eight pages; an octavo of 16 pages, 8 × 6.—[TRANS.]

to the reading-rooms were increased in the same proportion ; but we see that for isolated individuals the reading of the journals became a luxury.

We have seen that the law prohibiting the liberty of the press was definitely repealed on the 14th of *Thermidor* of the year VII. But this repeal did not actually restore the liberty of the press. The military conditions were then extremely critical, and since Russia had fallen into line France seemed to be once more in danger of losing her independence, as in 1792 and 1793. The Directory thought fit, by other means, to render the reconstitution of a royalist opposition press an impossibility.

Article 145 of the Constitution authorised the Directory, in case of conspiracy against the external or internal security of the State, to issue warrants of arrest and of detention.

On the other hand, by the law of the 22nd of *Fructidor* of the year V the " royalist writers " were deported. The Directory affected to regard the " royalist journalists " of the year VII as the successors and continuation of those of the year V, and on the 16th of *Fructidor* ordered the deportation of a large number. On the following day the Directory arrested, among other journalists, the authors of the two democratic journals : the *Journal des hommes libres* and the *Défenseur de la patrie*, an avatar of the *Ami du peuple*. The Minister of Police, Fouché, in a report dated the same day, justified these measures thus :

" The liberty of thinking or of writing is not at all the same thing as the liberty to rally at the top of one's voice all the passions and resentments directed against the Government and institutions ; there can be no impunity for those who dictate crimes and cause revolt, when the law seizes those who are guided or seduced ; and government would no longer be possible were writers to conspire under the shelter of the law by the grace of the very power they had most loudly defied."

It would thus be erroneous to suppose that the

periodical press enjoyed liberty from the 14th of *Thermidor* of the year VII to the 18th of *Brumaire* of the year VIII ; for the dictatorial system established on the 18th of *Fructidor*, although legally suppressed two years later, was continued in actual fact, on account of the exceptional gravity of the circumstances, until the fall of the Directory.

END OF VOL. III.

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